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Calvinist Contact

An independent Christian weekly

April 28, 1989 / 44th year of publication / No. 2163

Lee optimistic about United Church

Paul De Groot

EDMONTON — Members of the United Church are having sober second thoughts about the controversy over ordaining homosexuals and electing to stay with the church, says it moderator.

Last month, Rev. Sang Chul Lee told Edmonton members of the church that "I am not desperate, I am not terribly frightened," about the future of the United Church, in spite of the deep divisions generated by the controversy.

The church was deeply split following a statement issued by its general council last August. The statement went too far in endorsing homosexuality, many members said, while others claimed it did not go far enough to welcome homosexuals.

Anger subsided

Lee, pastor of the Korean United Church in Toronto, was elected moderator of the church for a two-year term at that assembly. The first day he walked into his office in church headquarters in Toronto, 800 letters were piled on his desk, most of them expressing anger at the church's statement on membership and homosexuality.

But a few months later, a number of those people wrote again to say that their first letter had been written in the heat of the moment; and many have since decided to be more receptive to the general council statement, Lee said. While they may still have questions about it, they say they can "live with it."

"People can change," Lee said at a meeting at Avonmore United Church Tuesday evening. Famed as a story teller, he recalled the first time he tried to get a Canadian-born friend to sample sushi (raw fish on rice) at a Japanese restaurant in Vancouver 25 years ago. Today, Toronto's sushi bars are filled with Canadians, he said.

Change may frighten people, but "if we say we will never change, we lock ourselves in a cell."

Wide embrace

"It is possible for different people to live together with love, because love has unlimited power. When we are convinced we cannot love some people, that's where fear comes from. I try to emphasize to people that unless you struggle with an issue, you won't understand it," Lee said in an interview.

Lee thinks few Christian churches have shown the courage of the United Church in tackling the difficult issue of homosexuality.

The United Church "has such a large heart. It can embrace everybody," said Lee, an ethnic Korean and the first Asian to head the United Church of Canada.

Born into a family which followed shamanism and Confucianism, he became a Christian as a result of his education in mission schools in Siberia where he was born, and in Manchuria and Korea.

The United Church's wide embrace "attracted me from the beginning, and as I look around at other churches I think it is still unique in that way."

Nova Scotia artist speaks to the Christian community

Photo: Anne Hutten

Matt Cupido at the opening of his Wolfville show. The bird picture is entitled, "Patriarch."

Anne Hutten

WOLFVILLE, N.S. — During six weeks of March and April, the Carriage House Gallery exhibited work by Matt Cupido. Appropriately, the show dealt with themes of suffering and healing, from a distinctively religious viewpoint.

Included were pen and ink studies of the 12 disciples, woodcuts representing the fruits of the Spirit, another woodcut depicting the suffering Christ, and an unusual round-table version of the Last Supper. Other images were less overtly Christian, with a wide variety of media and styles. Bold colours and strokes are among the characteristics of Cupido's work. He loves deep blues and browns and ochres, and bright fiery colours.

Diversity is typical of Cupido's work; in fact, some inconsistency could be observed in the Wolfville collection. Cupido at times seems to be struggling for expression, while other pieces speak powerfully to even the casual observer. The artist himself says his work comes out of a highly emotional philosophy, dealing more with what he feels and believes than what he sees. This perspective is not new to those who have seen Cupido's work over the years.

Born in the Netherlands, Matt Cupido came to Canada in 1955. He has lived and worked in Edmonton, Victoria, Vancouver, and Toronto. Early in the 1980s he and his wife, Willy, moved to the Annapolis Valley, settling on the outskirts of Canning, a rural village.

It was in Toronto that he became a well-known member of the Patmos art workshop, and where he cut the magnificent CANADA block that was presented to the Governor General. Cupido has exhibited his work not only in Canada, but in the U.S.A. and the Netherlands also.

Commercial standards

How good is Cupido's work? One local art expert says he is very competent, showing strong artistic training. The same expert wonders whether there is anything new in Cupido's art; whether, in fact, it's possible to say anything new about images that are two thousand years old.

Certainly Cupido is a failure if commercial success is the standard by which his work is to be judged. In the Annapolis Valley art world, success is Alex Colville, also in Wolfville, famed around the globe, with high prices for the small number of pieces he paints each year. Cupido considers this view typical of Atlantic Canada.

"There's still the notion that if the artist is very good, he is a god. If he is not very good, he has no name," says Cupido. He knows that his work appeals to a small minority of people, possibly the same group who like sacred music. Not that that bothers him at all.

See **ARTIST** — p. 2

Philosophy profs discuss curriculum

Robert VanderVennen

TORONTO — Professors of philosophy at colleges supported by the Christian Reformed Church met recently at Trinity Christian College, Chicago, to talk together about how and why philosophy should be taught at Christian colleges.

The occasion was the "Vrieze Philosophy Conference," financed from a fund in memory of Dr. Maarten Vrieze, philosophy professor at Trinity for 20 years until his death in 1986. Participating were philosophers from The King's College, Redeemer College, the Institute for Christian Studies, Dordt College, Calvin College, and Trinity. Also present were speakers from Northwestern College (Iowa) and Gordon College. This unique conference was organized by George Pierson and John Roose, philosophy professors at Trinity.

The focus of discussion for the 20 professors who attended was not what should be taught to philosophy majors, but what kind of philosophy teaching

See **NOT** — p. 3

Photo: Trinity Christian College

Professors work together at Vrieze Philosophy Conference.

Thinkbit

"He who laughs last probably didn't get the joke."

Source: unknown

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Artist receives emotional and philosophical support

Photo: Anne Hutten
Last Supper *by Matt Cupido*

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"It would bother me a lot more if I were to fall into the trap of making art for a conscious majority," he says. "I am not looking for commercial success; never have been; never will. What I'm looking for is to shake somebody's conscience, to become more than just an onlooker of life, of my art. To become, in some sense, confronted and convicted by it." It's only logical that his work should appeal to the Christian community, he adds, making no apology.

Although it's sometimes seen as a disadvantage to speak to a particular constituency, Cupido is of the opinion that the artist has no choice. The artist will respond to those people who are emotionally and confessionally on his own wavelength.

Response to Cupido's work, from that Christian community, has grown stronger over the years. He recalls family and friends severely questioning his need to be an artist, but finds that there is far more support now. Although some remnants of the image-breaking, altar-smashing Reformation purge hover beneath the surface, this is not true at any conscious level.

Cupido says support comes in emotional and philosophical form, even when it's not reflected in purchases of his work. People aren't always able to break through the habit of Calvinistic frugality, considering works of art a luxury even when they value such works. Generally speaking, Cupido feels that he is surrounded by a supporting community.

In the Annapolis Valley, that is an important factor. He no longer has the artistic and academic circle of his Toronto years.

Listening and leading

"You have to listen very closely to the ordinary man, and to your own community of believers," says Cupido. That does not mean he totally ignores opinions from the secular art world. Every artist hammers on the roadside, and can't help but have some influence on the people who see his work. But Cupido considers that a fringe issue.

"I paint for those people who love me as a person, as who I am. And I am by confession a Christian. One's work becomes focused on that." In time, he expects his work to evolve to yet different forms. He may become a little more acidic, he says, a little more impatient, more urgent, and that could lead to a different technique.

Cupido doesn't expect great fame. He foresees change, but with his Christian vision as the one constant factor.

"I do hope that for the rest of my life I can remain doing what I do with the same conviction as I have done before. And that's already blessing enough."

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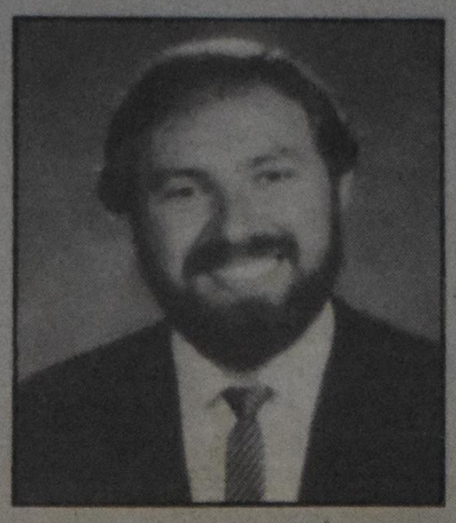
BETWEEN THE LINES

Socio-political comment by Syd Hielema, Clarence Joldersma, Jake Kuiken.



Hockey playoffs: the yearly ritual

Every April about this time a season arrives in Canada that spans winter and spring: hockey's playoffs. For the uninitiated, hockey begins sometime in September and the regular season ends in March. The successful teams then enter a second season, the playoffs, that ends with the advent of June. During this season games occur almost nightly. That is a lot of hockey, by anyone's standards.

When I was younger, much to my mother's dismay, I followed hockey playoffs religiously. Sandwiched in between the NHL's Hockey Night in Canada on CBC and CTV were games of the city's Junior A team on Hamilton's CHCH. The local Junior B team and the (religiously motivated?) CRC church hockey playoffs at the local arena rounded off the playoff menu — a game for every night of the week (except Sundays, of course). Now that I am older and more mature I am no longer in the grip of hockey playoffs, although I do lapse now and then. The other Saturday I watched the third period and overtime of the Vancouver/Calgary seventh game, as well as part of the Los Angeles/Edmonton seventh game. My mother, I fear, would still not be pleased.

What's the attraction?

What makes hockey — or any sports event — so captivating? Why are so many people, including many of my students and fellow staff members, spell-bound by grown men (or boys, or women) with pieces of wood in their hands and sharp metal strips on their shoes chasing a flat rubber disk around an ice surface? What makes games like these so entrancing, so absorbing?

There are many possible answers to this question. One is that people (especially men and boys) vicariously live out their dreams of fame and glory through professional sports stars. Another is that people need excitement and success in their lives and live this out in the arena of sport, either by playing or by watching. A third reason might be that people are trying to hone certain skills and enjoy watching others with superior skills and abilities. All of these may be true, but I think there is a deeper reason, one that has to do with the nature of games themselves.

Games involve *playing* and playing is totally different from *working*. When compared to working, playing is not a serious activity. That does not mean, however, that a player treats the game frivolously or makes playing trivial; to play properly means to be serious about playing. A person whose play does not take the game seriously is a spoilsport and ruins the game for others. This seriousness, however, primarily involves losing oneself in the game. Playing means forgetting who you are and becoming totally absorbed in the role that you as the player have in the game.

Playing primarily involves a to-and-fro movement of something, whether it be a puck, baseball, soccer ball, or chess piece. The rules of a game make sure that each player has a fair chance at this to-and-fro movement. A well-played hockey game, for example, is one in which there is an endless cycle of rushes down the ice and counter-rules back the other way. Hundreds of decisions and actions are instantly made to make this happen, each one a potential success or failure. The attractiveness of the game, I think, lies in this risk. A player enjoys the freedom of making decisions within the limits of the game's precise rules, always with the risk of being outplayed. The to-and-fro movement of playing allows this to happen.

Many people, myself included, do not tire easily from being immersed and absorbed in this unique type of activity. Because games have no definite end, accept for an arbitrarily assigned time limit or point total, they may go on indefinitely, and interest can always be renewed. The indefinite nature of the to-and-fro movement with its ever-new possibilities allows tireless participation, either through watching or doing.

For that reason, hockey playoffs — this year, again — are attractive to me. The winning of the Stanley Cup, although important for each team, is really a secondary goal and not the primary reason for watching. Deep down, what makes it meaningful is the nature of the game itself.

Clarence Joldersma teaches at Smithville (Ont.) District Christian High School and plays pickup hockey at the local arena once a week during the season with other SDCH staff and students.

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl

It's the season for potholes, geraniumsplits, birdwatching, fiddleheads and paying unto Ceasar. The H&R Block offices spring up like daffodils out of defrosted soil. Giving tax advice has become a half a billion dollar industry in our country, employing about 7,000 people. I searched the papers for some information about tax and Revenue Canada and found it in my favourite *Calgary Herald*.

The Income Tax Act, which was introduced in 1917 as a temporary measure to help pay for W.W. I bills, has swollen to a volume of 3,000 pages of grey and lifeless prose. Revenue Canada employs about 20,000 people, except in this tax-harvest season when it ranks swell with some 8,000 part-timers. Revenue Canada has a budget of almost $900 million.

★★★★

Political popularity polls descend upon us with the regularity of Greenwich time signals. The last one had the Liberals ahead of the Tories with about one per cent. One should not attach much importance to these polls: voters are a fickle lot. Their decisions can change overnight when a political leader wears a tie they don't like. The Gallup pollsters asked Canadians about their preference for the NDP leadership. Stephen Lewis came out on top. It would be nice to have a man of that stature in the House of Commons, but it is hard to see Joe Lunchbucket on the nightshift vote for Lewis. They don't speak the same language.

★★★★

Stories about nuclear fusion at room temperature conjures up pictures of filling up the family car from the watertap. A bit premature, to say the least. Gasoline prices went up at the pumps. Perhaps we have to pay for Exxon's unexpected clean-up costs.

★★★★

Everybody knows the apocryphal story of the Dutch boy who stuck his finger in the dike and by so doing prevented a flood. The Kingston *Whig-Standard* reports that the Kingston fire department went out on an emergency call to assist a man who got his finger stuck in the valve of his waterbed. The fire department succeeded in freeing the man, but there was quite a bit of water damage to his apartment. It did not happen on April 1 either.

★★★★

Governor-General Mme. Sauve has been awarded the Beth Shalom annual humanitarian award. For closing the beautiful grounds of the Government House to the public, I guess. There are rumours that Joe Clark may be her successor. Far out? Yes, but Monsieur dearly loves to get rid of Red Tories. Which reminds me, Flora MacDonald is all set to travel by car from India to China's coast. Bon voyage, Flora!

★★★★

The governor of the Bank of Canada is not about to lower interest rates. Inflation is still too high, approaching 5 per cent. Governor John Crow said, however, that he sees signs which would indicate that the pressure on prices is beginning to slow. It is still time to put your wallet on hold.

★★★★

Mr. Pawley, former premier of Manitoba, is leaving the political arena to become a partner of a Winnipeg law firm, where he will workwith the former Manitoba attorney general Vic Schroeder.

★★★★

Washington, like all capitals, is a pit of political intrigue. The Republicans, still smarting from the Tower defeat, went after the Democrat Speaker of the House. The ethics committee of the House of Representatives had already spent nine months and more than $1 million on preliminary investigations of Mr. Jim Wright. Mr. Wright has some nice things going for him: rent-free use of a flat, and very lucrative payments for a very thin volume published by one of his political allies.

★★★★

Political analysts say that the frigid relationships between Moscow and Pretoria are thawing. A soviet deputy foreign minister made a secret visit to South Africa recently. The Foreign Minister, who was sent by Gorbachev to Georgia, said: we have learned to talk with foreign countries, we now must learn to discuss political matters with our own citizens. He made reference to the unrest in the Baltic States and in Armenia and Georgia.

★★★★

We don't hear much about hostilities between Iran and Iraq. That is because the 350 UN peacekeepers, called UNIIMOG (United Nations Iran Iraq Observers Group) under the command of a Yugoslavian general, are doing a very good job. This week the peace negotiations continue in Geneva.

★★★★

The UN peacekeeping force in Namibia has also succeeded in restoring peace between the fighting forces of South Africa and SWAPO. It is noteworthy that a Swiss battalion is part of that UN group. It marks the first deployment of Swiss troops abroad since the battle of Marigano, early in the 16th century. The Swiss participation in the peacekeeping efforts is even more remarkable considering the fact that in 1986 Swiss voters turned down full membership in the United Nations.

★★★★

The Philippines comprises more than 7,000 islands. Not surprisingly, it occasionally mislays one or two. A military plane set out for the Kaylayaan islands with voting papers for the village elections being held throughout the Philippines. The plane searched and searched but couldn't spot the islands. A second plane was dispatched. Not only did it not find the islands but it couldn't find the way home. Nearly out of fuel, it landed on a previously uncharted islet, inadvertently adding a new outpost to the republic.

★★★★

The pooch population in the U.S. stands at some 50 million, consuming about $3 billion in dog food a year. I am sure that you wanted to know that. This comes on top of all other American acts of generosity such as supporting the Israeli government with $2 billion a year.

★★★★

I spotted the following letter in an English newspaper: the *Hampstead and Highgate Express*.

I am presently putting together some material about really boring things. I'd welcome any contributions which your readers could supply such as pointless stories, uninteresting statistics, dull tales, etc.

Here is a chance for members of the cloth to clean their shelves of old sermons.

Carl Tuyl is pastor of the First Christian Reformed Church in Kingston, Ont.

Not whether but which

... continued from page 1.

should reach all college students. The colleges related to the Christian Reformed Church are among the few which require some study of philosophy of all their students.

For the study of philosophy to be so important that all students should be exposed to it, the professors agreed that it must help students understand their other courses better and in more deeply Christian ways.

Calvin Seerveld told the conference that some kind of philosophy or other always shapes a student's thinking in every academic field, so systematic, biblically-rooted philosophy study is essential to Christian study. He added that philosophy is in fact being taught in all college courses — whether consciously or not — so it should be good philosophy. Philosophy should not be narrowly specialized but foundational and interdisciplinary.

Philosophy serves all fields

It was agreed that if philosophy is really to serve all academic subjects, then the philosophy professors need to work hand-in-hand with professors in all the departments. Theodore Plantinga said that he felt privileged because many of his colleagues at Redeemer College are knowledgeable about philosophy and its place in their fields.

The conference was more practical than theoretical. There was much sharing of information as to how philosophy is taught to non-majors at the various colleges. In his opening address Plantinga identified 11 possible aims for the teaching of introductory philosophy. Panel discussions and workshops dealt with course requirements and how to teach philosophy better ....

One of the problems discussed was the increasing squeeze that specialized courses of study put on room for courses like philosophy which do not directly contribute to one's professional skills. William Rowe of the Institute commented on the lack of preparation of students entering philosophy courses and the need to catch the interest and develop the enthusiasm of students for whom philosophy seems irrelevant.

General agreement

There was a very good spirit at the conference, reported Plantinga, though naturally there were some differences of opinion. In general the place of philosophy in the instructional program was conceived in a "reformational" way, a way of thinking in the spirit of the Dutch philosophers Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven which was brought to Calvin College by H. Evan Runner in 1952 and to Trinity by Seerveld in 1959. Seerveld was very pleased that a number of his former students were providing leadership at the conference as professional colleagues.

The philosophers came away from the conference very happy for the warm congenial spirit that exists among people who work in a field known for heated arguments, and for the open co-operation and mutual respect that exists among these Reformed colleges.

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Editorial

A "straight" view of the gay life

There are a number of thoughts and feelings tugging away at me when I talk about homosexuality. There is the idea that I don't know what it is like to go through the experience of discovering that instead of being attracted to members of the opposite sex, you want physical intimacy with members of your own sex. I don't know what it is like to be looked down upon because of my sexual orientation or way of handling myself. There is also the feeling that I and others have no right to talk about homosexuality as long as the pastoral concern for homosexuals is at a permanent low ebb.

I have to remind myself that I am talking about matters that affect others far more than they affect me. The average church community is all right for people who are considered "normal," but there is little sympathy and a lot of judgment for those who are considered "deviants." As a consequence, anything I may have to say about homosexuality will have a somewhat hollow sound. For that reason, we have opened the pages of *Calvinist Contact* to people who know from personal experience what it is like to be different.

I would gladly leave the task of giving the community guidance in the hands of gay Christians, if I were assured that with their understanding and experience they are in the best position to do so. There is, however, a drawback to speaking from personal experience and pain. One easily loses perspective when it comes to considering legitimate aspects that might speak against a chosen life style. What if the Bible has a word of judgment, what if the creation order speaks against the course you have taken. Will you be the one to blow the whistle?

We need to listen to both: homosexual Christians and heterosexual Christians; and they need to listen to each other to polish each other's perspective.

Acid curses

As an outsider, I am willing to contribute my thoughts on the matter. These are somewhat scattered, but pertinent, I hope.

First of all, I see the condition of homosexuality as a curse, not as a sin. All of us are subject to the curse that came on us through sin. Some of us are cursed with poor health, others with incest, others with war, hunger, social corruption, unemployment, emotional starvation, mental or physical handicaps, being a preacher's kid and the like. We did not choose these curses. They fell on us like acid rain. I see homosexuality as such a curse, whether the condition is genetic or learned.

There are people, gay and otherwise, who would immediately attack me on this position. They see homosexuality as a perfectly acceptable and alternative orientation, and want to celebrate the gay life style. They seek to have the homosexual orientation sanctioned and the homosexual lifestyle respected, also within the church.

There is one powerful fact that speaks loudly against this position. Never in the history of humankind has a homosexual union been blessed with offspring. From the procreational point of view, it is always a barren relationship. This fact alone keeps me from entertaining the possibility raised by Willem Hart in his article that perhaps God did not only create us male and female, but also male and male, female and female.

I am deeply saddened by a recent decision by the Canadian Human Rights Commission that in order to extend bereavement benefits to homosexual couples, they may have to be considered a family. That ruling speaks against the creation order as revealed in Genesis 1 and in our human experience.

Saying that the homosexual orientation is a curse, does not doom the homosexual person. If that were so, we would all be doomed. God allows and enables us to turn some curses into blessing and to live with whatever cannot be turned into a blessing in the hope of the resurrection. Some day, all curses will fall away from us like loose sand.

The impossible dream

A Christian counsellor I talked to said that she wants to believe that if two homosexual lovers live together in a bond of faithfulness, that such a union could be a highly responsible and moral union. She wanted to believe this but reality showed that ideal to be somewhat romantic and unrealistic, she admitted. Homosexual clients themselves have told her that a homosexual relationship is not one of intimacy but one of power. Whenever a heterosexual couple relates in terms of power and not intimacy, she feels that such a couple needs counselling.

She was also told by her homosexual clients that it was well-nigh impossible for them to stay with one partner. This fact has been backed up by a 1978 report from Bell and Weinberg, which showed that 92 per cent of the study group of homosexual participants engaged in sexual behaviour with between 25 to more than a thousand partners in a lifetime. Of the eight per cent who were found to have fewer than 25 partners, none had only one or two; and only one per cent had three or four. The rest had between five and 25.

Who are we fooling when we suggest that we should accept a homosexual lifestyle under conditions that seem ultimately unattainable — intimacy and faithfulness.

Modern distinctions

Some people suggest that the Bible does not address homosexual orientation, and that, whenever it talks about homosexuality as a sin, it deals with the lustful behaviour of people who are normally heterosexual. We must take this point seriously.

The Bible does not talk about alcoholic orientation either. What it does say, however, is that it is wrong to get drunk. The difference between orientation and practice are modern distinctions made by the modern sciences, sociology and psychology. But does that mean that, since the Bible does not make the distinction, it's OK for an alcoholic to act out his or her alcoholic orientation, and that the Bible only speaks out against "normal" people who get "plastered" on the weekend?

In the same way, just because the Bible does not address the homosexual orientation, does that mean that it is wrong only for a heterosexual person to have intercourse with someone of his or her own sex, but it's alright for someone with a homosexual orientation?

Two rocks

I would like to work hard at accepting homosexual people in our midst. But in doing so, I feel caught between two hard places — the judgmental group that dismisses even the homosexual orientation as sin, that will not unconditionally love the homosexual neighbour, not until he or she acts like a heterosexual person, for example, and that even includes mannerisms, speech and body language; and the group, much smaller and usually outside the church, that wants me to accept homosexual people on their own terms: approval of a caring and faithful homosexual relationship.

I do not feel free to join either group. As I extend my love, I must place myself under the banner of God's will for human sexuality. God knows, I have failed in giving a true and beautiful expression of that sexuality in my own life. As I grew up, my mind was polluted by a Western obsession with the female breast and eroticism in general and the notion of male power in sexuality. That happens to be the curse *I* have to deal with.

But I do not want anyone to accept me on the basis of my curse. For me too, the line applies: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Two-pronged strategy

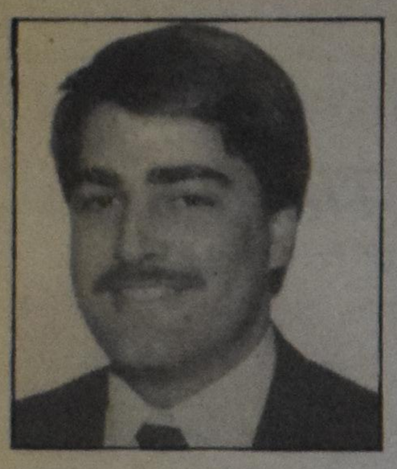
The problem with curses is that they make us more inclined to sin. And that's where the confusion usually begins. Where does the curse end and where does the sin start? We often don't know. We need a new nature, because if we live according to the old, sinful and cursed nature, we will die. Romans 8 is very clear on that.

We need to be led by the Spirit, who is able to put to death the misdeeds of the body. One of the most useful instruments the Spirit uses, I have found, is Christian psychotherapy. It is the best instrument we have for tackling curses. The church is not very good at dealing with curses. It seems to find it easier to address sin. We need both — a dual attack on sin and curse.

I hope that the discussions in our paper are part of that dual attack.

BW

FETISHES/DAVE FEDDES



The bear facts

A Russian parable tells of a hunter who met a large bear in the woods. The man raised his rifle and took careful aim. Just as the hunter began to squeeze the trigger, the bear spoke in a soft, soothing voice, "Isn't it better to talk than to shoot? What do you want? Let's negotiate this matter."

Lowering his rifle for a moment, the man declared, "I want a fur coat."

"Good," the bear replied. "that is certainly a reasonable request. I only want a full stomach. Let us negotiate a compromise that will please both of us."

They sat down together to work out a compromise. After a few minutes, the bear walked away alone. The compromise had been a success. The bear had a full stomach, and the hunter had his fur coat.

Compromise sounds so wise. But the bear usually gets his meal. Consider the question of who Jesus really is. Those who knew Jesus during the time when he walked on earth disagreed sharply in their opinions of him. Some believed he was the Messiah and the eternal Son of God, so they worshipped him. Others thought he was a demon-controlled blasphemer, so they had him killed.

But many modern people are too wise to be carried away by either extreme. We need not choose between the demonic or the divine. It is a sensible compromise to regard Jesus as a great moral teacher. Some compromise! Such compromise makes Jesus' death just another tragedy, and his resurrection just another myth. Jesus then lied when he claimed to be the Son of God. Faith in Jesus knows no compromise.

Exalted individual rights

The urge to compromise again appears when we consider the authority of the Bible. Some think it is boring, outdated, and full of errors. Others find it is the very Word of God written. The enlightened advocate of compromise, however, avoids both extremes. The word of compromise declares that the Bible is indeed special, for some of its words are words from God. But it also contains plenty of human mistakes. Some compromise! Whatever we like in the Bible, we can label God's Word; whatever we dislike, human error. Each individual becomes the final authority. A compromised view of scripture denies its authority and exalts individual opinion.

Or consider the moral question of abortion. Some people are adamantly opposed to abortion at every stage of a baby's development. Others believe abortion is every woman's right, almost until the moment of delivery. Some folks would like to see a compromise between these two extreme positions. Abortions should be permitted within the first 22 weeks of a pregnancy. Some compromise! More than 99 per cent of abortions are performed during the first 22 weeks. Indeed, it is now possible for some babies born at 22 weeks to survive outside the womb. In essence, this compromise simply places the stamp of approval on nearly every abortion.

Sometimes the devil goes about like a roaring lion. But beware when he comes as a negotiating bear. In either case, he is seeking to devour.

Dave Feddes is pastor of Westmount Christian Reformed Church, Strathroy, Ont.

Letters

Breaking through the contradictions

I want to thank Mike Geisterfer (Mar. 31) for sharing a sad part of his life. For me, it also brought back painful memories. The tornado within the church touched down in Woodstock, but its devastating effect was felt in many other communities, and unfortunately, still lingers.

I am sorry Mike had to carry his hurts so long. It took love and courage to share them with us. I pray this article will be another step forward in bringing forth healing for all.

We do care and we do love you, Mike.

The article by Lloyd Rang in the same issue exposes one of the most serious problems in the church — a false sense of piety — doing Christian things versus being a Christian.

There are startling examples of how pastors preach and expose, and then when the congregation responds to the call to evangelize, they set up a classical committee to undo what's been preached.

Sad to say, it's the same in our families. It's these contradictions that our young people are so susceptible to.

I thank God for young people who can see through the false sense of piety. It's articles like those from Rang and Geisterfer that should give us much hope.

Bernie Bax
Clearwater, Ont.

Edmonton churches provide reasons for praise

Tini Boivin Van Ameyde's articles "Zijn lof in de nacht" were interesting and thought-provoking. Her ability to put her thoughts on paper are, in my opinion, admirable, although I do not always agree with what she writes.

"Zijn lof in de nacht" was a case in point. Most of the sentiments expressed I do agree with, being acquainted with the various issues touched upon. However, the reader is left with the impression that Christian Reformed Edmonton is a den of hypocritical iniquity, in spite of the short postscript on some positive aspects.

In all fairness, Tini would do well to use her talents by writing some articles on the positive things which have happened and are still happening in the CRC in Edmonton. Such articles would give the readers a more balanced and total picture.

Come on, Tini, there is much for which to be thankful. So much, in fact, that we have every reason to sing God's praises both night and day.

D.H. Diepeveen
Edmonton, Alta.

In defence of corduroy socialists

"Three-piece suits do not look good on opponents of capitalism," writes the Rev. Carl Tuyl (Mar. 17). For 19 centuries the clergy, in their three-piece suits, could not come up with a plan to look after the poor. Capitalism, with no rights for the working person, set the course.

However, in that select, well-dressed army of preachers was Rev. Tommy Douglas. He gave up his well-protected income to work for the poor, to protect them from the cradle to the grave.

He went from city to city, from province to province, speaking for the labour party. It didn't take long before he was off to Ottawa. Many social benefits resulted from this move. These gains proved to be profitable to all, even for Rev. Tuyl and the church budget.

If only the Christian [Heritage] Party could become the Labour Party, I could vote in peace.

K. Mazereeuw
Mississauga, Ont.

President Bush the wrong person to address for peace

The move by the Canadian churches to urge the P.M. to press Bush on peace in Central America (C.C. Feb. 24) is very impressive indeed. However, my respectful submission is that this urgent request will die in the White House, if it ever gets there.

To make a long story short, one should understand that since the Office for Strategic Studies (OSS) was liquidated to make room for the CIA, relations between the U.S. and other nations were altered, unfortunately, not for the better.

For some obvious reasons, the CIA is publicity shy; yet, it is influential, powerful and manipulative. In some cases, it undermines, if not overthrows, foreign governments. The members of this organization do not maintain moral standards of any kind and possess an uncontrollable lust for power.

It's interesting to know that similar common denominators are noticeable in the Mafia, the U.S. oil industry, and, of course, you guessed it, in the U.S. military. Thanks to the Free Masonry, these organizations are all closely linked.

With this in mind, take a look at George Bush's history and background — a Texas oil man, a former military man and, of course, a former director of the CIA.

To become and survive as president of the United States requires more than just an election campaign and a victory at the polls. It also requires making agreements with the above organizations.

The White House is the wrong place when shopping for peace. Dear religious leaders of Canada and everyone else concerned about improving the situation in Central America, when you read the mind of President Bush as well as his lips, you will conclude that there will be no collaborative effort from Bush to serve human interests in Central America. Bush will not leave the White House as a man committed to peace but rather as a banker's friend. Leave this man alone!

There are other avenues open to you, such as investigating for yourself, exercising the right to think and to carry out, organizing workshops and seminars, contacting and collaborating with European parliaments and with churches from across Europe.

Roger G. Visser
Royal Palm Beach, Fla.

BEYOND BELIEF

CHURCH'S SINGLES GET ACQUAINTED NITE
DO YOU THINK GOD LOVES US ORDINARY GUYS AS MUCH AS HE DOES THE HUNKS?
BUT OF COURSE HE DOES, DON'T BE RIDICUL... HEY
OOPS... PARDON ME
BUT THEN HIS WAYS AREN'T ALWAYS OUR WAYS

Letters / Poetry

Hurt children

Just want to take a few minutes to let you know how much we enjoy C.C. The article written by Michael Geisterfer was read and, I can tell you, it made the tears start.

There must be more children out there who were deeply uprooted emotionally because of injustices done to their parents — in the name of Christ. How sad! How courageous of Michael to open himself up like that, and how good of you to publish it.

Linda Vroon
Rocky Mountain House, Alta.

Same questions

I really appreciated your article "Whose children Live Here?" (Mar. 31) I am a young person who often asks the same questions myself. Is our faith really alive? Thanks again.

Jennifer de Groot
Sarnia, Ont.

Bids fond farewell to Dutch writers

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the writers and contributors of the Dutch articles. Even though I was 12 years old when I came to Canada, I still enjoy reading the Dutch pages in C.C. Some things are hard to grasp, but then I read them out loud, and that seems to help. I've had some real good laughs, believe me.

After I've finished reading the Dutch articles, I cut them out and send them to my husband's sisters in Holland, and they love reading them, too. Even though I prefer reading English, my Dutch is still very good.

So "thank you" Syrt Wolters, Tini van Ameyde, Herman de Jong, Pastor Carl Tuyl and whomever else may have contributed to the Dutch pages. I'm sure the older folks will miss them very much; too bad they had to end now.

Henny Schoon
Chatham, Ont.

The Robins

Two robins are playing
continuously swaying
portraying
a frolicsome scene.

Back
and
forth flowing
gradually
l
o
w
e
r
i
n
g
no danger is seen!

I hear engine-running
and see a car coming —
though agile and cunning
one robin is killed.

The other one crying
continues its flying
over the mate lying
by the road, stilled.

Its constant dirging
and desperate urging
brings no emerging ...

... at day's ending
once more ascending
I hear it rendering
a beautiful song.

... then it is gone!

Didy Prinzen
Whitby, Ont.

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Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

Say Anything

Rated PG
Stars John Cusack, Ione Skye, John Mahoney
Written and directed by Cameron Crowe

Say Anything is a "teen flick." Such films, rightly, don't have a good reputation among critics and serious moviegoers. This one, however, could go some distance towards elevating the genre if other makers of teen films were to take a careful look at it.

First of all, it does not glorify leering young males who try to blame raging hormones for all manner of despicable and sexist behaviour (a la *Porky's)*. And though its characters do use occasional profanity (which is offensive), they do not swear and/or use vulgarisms constantly to prove their worth, popularity or sexual prowess.

Granted, the plot isn't exactly new: a mismatched pair consisting of a lower class boy and a smart, classy girl get together despite her father's objections and society's structures. But what the film does with that plot is, by and large, refreshing.

Perhaps most refreshing of all is that these just-graduated highschoolers are intelligent and capable of talking in complete, grammatical sentences. In fact, in a nice twist, the female protagonist, Diane Cort (Ione Skye) is not only fairly "normal" personally and socially, but academically brilliant — she will major in chemistry and has received a fellowship which will allow her to attend university in England. She's also beautiful, but quite unaware of her own attractiveness. (Our society, as reflected in the movies, apparently hasn't come far enough yet to allow a brilliant woman to be average-looking.)

Not her style?

Lloyd Dobler, Diane's male counterpart (engagingly played by John Cusack), is not unintelligent, but he travels in a different circle, and education is not his priority. He is trying to avoid having to decide on a career. The only one he has seriously considered is kick boxing. But first, he wants to get to know Diane. He is drawn to her beauty, her mysterious, self-effacing manner and almost reclusive style; he summons the courage to ask her out.

The other important relationship in the film is between Diane and her divorced father, with whom she lives. Diane is the centre of her father's life and (before Lloyd comes along) she confides her deepest secrets to him. Once Lloyd becomes important to Diane, the father-daughter relationship starts to change. Needless to say, Dad doesn't like Lloyd; but the movie does not present that situation typically. There are surprising nuances — an element which lends strength to the film all the way through.

When a crisis totally erodes Diane's confidence in her father (he had been living a lie for years and she feels betrayed) it is Lloyd who sees the importance of trying to rebuild the father-daughter relationship.

In a final turn of the tables, *Say Anything* has Lloyd decide that his career should consist of something he has become very good at: offering moral and emotional support to Diane and encouraging her to use her gifts in a career of science. *Say Anything* places a high premium on genuine, trust-based friendship — student-to-student, in romance, and with one's family members.

While the rock music soundtrack may be irritating to anyone over 25, and the film periodically lapses into ordinariness, on the whole, *Say Anything* is a good film for viewing and discussing among high school students and between those students and their parents and/or teachers.

For the time being...

Adrian Peetoom

In praise of slippery slopes

While on holidays last September I revisited Baarn, the town from where I emigrated a lifetime ago. In snowy winters it had two memorable slippery slopes. One is no longer available: A hospital I never knew now squats where trees reached up and delicate deer grazed in childhood times.

But I remember that former small-town park especially for its attraction in wintertime. When snow fell (it seemed to fall more often then), we all assembled at the top of its one side, there where an untreed hill offered an afternoon of speedy adventures.

Oh to arrive first and prime the way! Up the hill and then, belly to sled, into the slow snow to make first tracks. Climb up again and follow the first tracks once more, a little faster and further now. Up again and down again.

I hear the talk and laughter of my friends on their way in the clear crisp air. They too join to make the sled-path smooth for ever faster rides. Look at those four, three sitting on the back of a tall one. Closer and closer to the road on the ever slipperier slope. Finally one cannot stop before the bike path just short of the road, and the whole busy crew of now soggy and red-faced daredevils knows it's time to put the (shoe-toe) brakes on at a still-safe spot.

It was here that our champion little sled, a speedy little thoroughbred envied by all, broke under the overweight of two older friends who took one trip too many. It was from here we would wind our way home, wet, tired, hungry and scraped-and-bruised from a few too many collisions. Not even a tear in at least one item of clothing (not to be hidden from sharp parental eyes) could dampen the spirits. When God provides snow on an afternoon filled with free time, slippery slopes are a must.

A greater challenge

I remember a second such place, it began in the midst of many trees, and twisted down a little hollow to the edge of a pond. It would take longer to prepare this slope, for it wasn't as steep, had to be carefully surveyed through the many trees, and presented a sudden drop onto the frozen pond at the bottom.

Slippery slopes! Gifts to those who are willing to exercise their limbs and lungs when the season provides the means. Risky of course, which is why all parents cautioned their children never to sled alone. Mind not the bully or two, the unintended collisions, a scrape or bloody nose, even some voices and fists raised for a fight (almost).

But pity those children whose parents counted the dangers more than the rewards, whose children were kept home, or put on sleds for a genteel parental pull around the block, safe — and dull after 60 seconds. Where would those poor children ever really learn about hills and snow, about freedom and risk, about friendship and the power that comes from having experienced (and mastered!) slow roads up and speedy slopes down. We heroes recognized them the next day, all pale and without stories to tell.

It seems to me that God provides slippery slopes for children and for those who have not forgotten to be like them.

One more thing. When I stood on that second slope again, carpeted only with soggy soil and rotting leaves in September, I could not believe how flat it was. Maybe it's because I've seen the Rocky Mountains, but there hardly seemed a downward path at all. The pond was still there, and I could see how a sled trail could be laid out. But where was the slope? Ah well, it's not for me at my age to doubt the imagination of children.

Adrian Peetoom is a senior editor at Scholastic-TAB Publications, Ltd., Richmond Hill, Ont.

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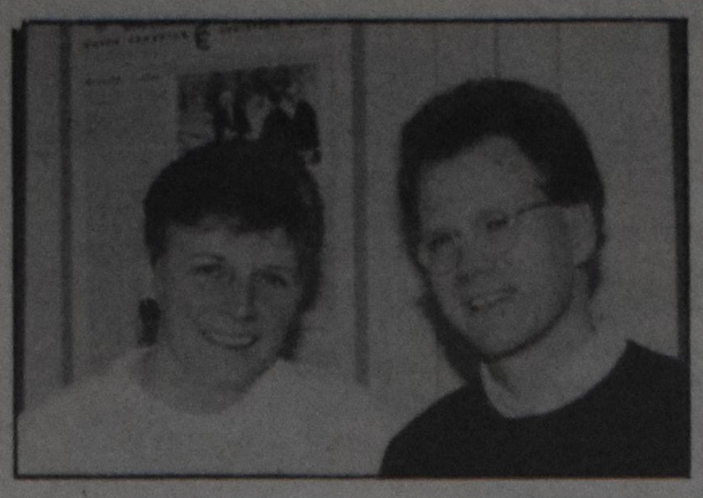

Peter and Marja are

Dear P and M:

There is a problem in my family that I would like to discuss with a pastor. I don't think that I can go to my own minister. In my other contacts with him I've sensed that he has limited gifts in counselling. I'm just not drawn to him. This particular family problem is a very sensitive matter and I don't think he could handle it.

There is a pastor in a neighbouring church who seems to be comfortable with some of today's issues. I am thinking of calling him and discussing our problem with him. The only thing that's holding me back is the guilty feeling that I'm by-passing my own pastor.

How do these things work? Do ministers refer? May I go to a pastor other than my own?

Dear On Hold:

Do ministers refer? Yes, many do. Unfortunately, some don't. A qualified and secure pastor makes referrals and also respects a parishioner's freedom to seek advice elsewhere. Professionals who work with people must recognize and be comfortable with their limitations. Only the Lord can be all things to all people.

If telling your pastor of your decision relieves your guilt, by all means let him know. You do not have to do this but you may want to for your own peace of mind. Be sensitive to his feelings if and when you inform him.

Dear P and M:

Our 20 year old son is still living at home. He's working now and he is paying room and board.

It works out well, except on Sundays. Everybody gets ready to go to church but most of the time he sleeps in. My husband and I end up in a bad mood. It takes a few minutes in church before we calm down. Our younger kids gripe and say things like: How come he gets to sleep in and we never do? The bad feelings return when we get home from church and find that he's gone to do his own thing.

Is there a certain age when kids get to make up their own minds about church attendance? We're trying to respect his rights but it sure makes it tough to keep the rest of the family on track.

Dear Still-Parenting:

A 20-year-old certainly has the right to make up his own mind about church attendance. As a young adult he also has the responsibility of contributing positively to the values of the family.

We know of families where children, when they turn 18, are given the freedom to stay or leave. It's presented as a positive choice and an acknowledgement of their maturity. If they choose to stay it's with the understanding that they live within the value system that governs the family. The choice to live on their own is also viewed positively.

We also know of a campus ministry housing project where university students live together intentionally. Each resident must commit him- or herself to that community's expectations, including worship, when they choose to live there.

Our point is simply this: your son has rights and responsibilities. These are the two sides of his freedom to choose.

Obviously, church attendance is very important to you. Your son's choice to sleep in most Sundays negatively affects the atmosphere in home and the attitudes of your younger children.

Our suggestion is this: Lay the problem before your son. He seems to be a reasonable person since generally "it works out well."

Ask him to consider how his behaviour affects his parents and influences the younger children. Explain that every family has different rules and "bottom lines." For your household, worship somewhere is that line. Put the problem with him. Respect his rights. Clearly state the household's expectations.

A family conference may also be in order. The younger children can also have some input and help your son see the whole picture.

Be genuine in allowing your son his freedom of choice. Avoid ultimatums. Whatever he chooses, don't make it a matter of personal hurt. If he chooses to stay, it's with the understanding that he maintains and contributes to the household's values. If he chooses to leave, support his decision fully and help him in his move.

The time to discuss this is not Sunday morning when feelings are running high. Set a time and place that will allow you to talk *with*, not *at*, your son.

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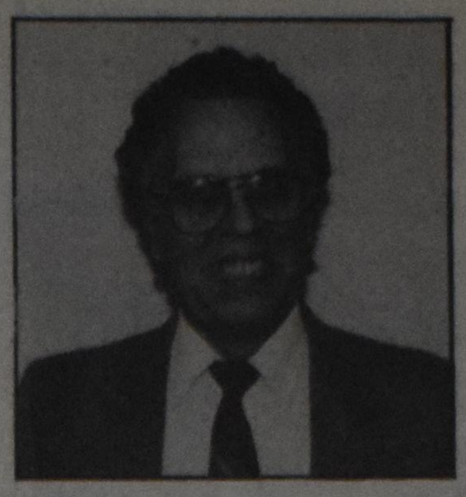

In and around the workplace

Ed Vanderkloet

Christian solidarity

In last month's column I severely criticized the secular notion of workers' solidarity. The problem with that kind of solidarity is that it contains some elements of truth.

There are times when a common front is needed. That's why the Western powers allied themselves with Stalin against the evil of Nazism. That's why William III allied himself with the Habsburgs and the Pope against the imperialism and tyranny of the French Sun king. That's why the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) welcomed the fact that the Teamsters did not cross its picket line when it went on strike 11 years ago.

Such temporary alliances, however, are not the same as displays of solidarity. As I wrote in the previous column, solidarity is something much more fundamental, it has a religious basis, i.e., the belief that workers everywhere share the same (materialist) goals, that they are always right, whereas the bosses are always wrong.

Don't discard baby with bathwater

But while we utterly reject this vulgarized version of solidarity, we must be careful not to throw away the baby with the bathwater. For when all is said and done, there *is* such a thing as solidarity. Truly Christian solidarity.

Christian solidarity in the workplace not only means promoting peace and harmony but also and above all, striving for social justice. In fact, without social justice there can be no reconciliation. Our Christian faith compels us to fight against injustice, and that frequently means a fight with unjust employers. And let's have no illusions about the so-called innate goodness of the employers. Almost daily the CLAC encounters social injustice in the workplace that makes one cringe.

To use one example out of hundreds, just recently the owner of the CLAC-organized firm announced that each half-shift would be reduced from four hours to three hours 55 minutes. The reason for such a strange regulation was that the contract called for a 10-minute coffee break every four hours. This way the employer thought he could do away with the coffee break. Fortunately, a labour board officer, called in by CLAC, persuaded him of the folly of his actions; the man was simply asking for trouble. To walk away from confrontation and to leave workers who are wronged in the lurch would be a betrayal of one's Christian convictions. CLAC cannot do so for conscience sake. For to act as if employers are always right is the equivalent of the Marxist notion that workers can do no wrong. The one is as much a myth as the other.

It bothers me to no end to hear Christian employers complain that the CLAC is just like any other union simply because it dares to stand up against employers and even went on strike a couple of times. It has even been accused of being no better than the Teamsters. CLAC has lost members and supporters because of such charges. Such people have never understood that the purpose of a Christian union is to have justice prevail in and around the workplace, and that whenever injustice is committed (by the employer or by the employees) a Christian union will stand up and be counted on the side of right.

Go and do likewise

Yes, there is such a thing as Christian Solidarity Forever. Christians show solidarity with all those who are wronged.

The best place to point to in the Bible is the parable of the Good Samaritan. An expert in the law asked Jesus how to inherit eternal life. When Jesus refers him to the great commandment (to love God above all and the neighbour as oneself) the man asks, "Who is my neighbour?" Then Jesus tells him the story of the man who lies at the roadside, robbed and beaten.

Two pious believers pass by on the other side but a foreigner, one of those despised heretics (who does not even know how to worship properly) shows compassion on him. "Who do you think was a neighbour to the man that was robbed?" asks Jesus. And the lawyer replies, "He who showed kindness to him." Then Jesus says: "Go and do likewise."

That's what true solidarity is all about.

Ed Vanderkloet is executive secretary of the Christian Labour Association of Canada, Mississauga, Ont.

Pastoral advice regarding homosexuality

(Acts of Synod 1973 of the Christian Reformed Church)

In order that the churches may deal in the pastoral way with the problems of homosexuality we recommend that synod serve the churches with the following statements of pastoral advice.

1. Homosexuality (male and female) is a condition of disordered sexuality which reflects the brokenness of our sinful world and for which the homosexual may himself bear only a minimal responsibility.

2. The homosexual may not, on the sole ground of his sexual disorder, be denied community acceptance, and if he is a Christian he is to be wholeheartedly embraced by the church as a person for whom Christ died.

3. Homosexualism — as explicit homosexual practice — must be condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture.

4. The church must exercise the same patient understanding of and compassion for the homosexual in his sins as for all other sinners. The gospel of God's grace in Christ is to be proclaimed to him as the basis of his forgiveness, the power of his renewal, and the source of his strength to lead a sanctified life. As all Christians in their weaknesses, the homosexual must be admonished and encouraged not to allow himself to be defeated by lapses in chastity, but rather, to repent and thereafter to depend in fervent prayer upon the means of grace for power to withstand temptation.

5. In order to live a life of chastity in obedience to God's will the homosexual needs the loving support and encouragement of the church. The church should therefore so include him in its fellowship that he is not tempted by rejection and loneliness to seek companionship in a "gay world" whose immoral life-style is alien to a Christian.

6. Homosexuals, especially in their earlier years, should be encouraged to seek such help as may effect their sexual reorientation and the church should do everything in its power to help the homosexual overcome his disorder. Members of the churches should understand that many homosexuals, who might otherwise seek therapeutic aid, are deterred from doing so by the fear of detection and consequent ostracism. Christian acceptance and support can in all such cases be a means toward healing and wholeness. On the other hand, to those who cannot be healed and who must accept the permanent limitations of their homosexuality, the church must minister in the same spirit as it ministers to widows, widowers, and the unmarried.

7. Christians who are homosexual in their orientation are like all Christians called to discipleship and to the employment of their gifts in the cause of the kingdom. They should recognize that their sexuality is subordinate to their obligation to live in wholehearted surrender to Christ.

By the same token, churches should recognize that their homosexual members are fellow-servants of Christ who are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected from heterosexuals. The homosexual member must not be supposed to have less the gift of self-control in the face of sexual temptation than does the heterosexual. The relationship of love and trust within the congregation should be such that in instances where a member's sexual propensity does create a problem, the problem can be dealt with in the same way as are problems caused by the limitations and disorders of any other member.

8. It is the duty of pastors to be informed about the condition of homosexuality and the particular problems of the homosexual in order that the pastor may minister to his need and to the need of others, such as parents, who may be intimately involved in the problems of homosexuality. The pastor is also in a position to instruct his congregation in appropriate ways about homosexuality and to alert members and office holders to the responsibility they bear toward homosexuals in the fellowship. He can encourage an understanding of and compassion for persons who live with this handicap, and dispel the prejudices under which they suffer.

9. The church should promote good marriage and healthy family life in which the relations between husband and wife and between parents and children are such that the psychological causes that may contribute to sexual inversion are reduced to a minimum. Parents should be encouraged to seek Christian counsel and help when they see signs of disordered sexual maturation in their children.

10. Institutions and agencies associated with the church that are in a position to contribute to the alleviation of the problem of homosexuality are encouraged to do so by assisting ministers to become better informed, by offering counseling services to the homosexual and his family, and by generally creating a Christian attitude in the churches as well as in society as a whole.

11. The church should speak the Word of God prophetically to a society and culture which glorifies sexuality and sexual gratification. It should foster a wholesome appreciation of sex and expose and condemn the idolatrous sexualism and the current celebration of homosexualism promoted in literature, the theatre, films, television, advertisements, and the like.

Hoping for a sensitive and sensible discussion of homosexuality

The issue of homosexuality has been nibbling at the edges of the church for many years. Last year, it took a substantial bite at the fabric of the United Church of Canada. It may well be that this one issue will cause a major rearrangement of church membership in many other churches in the future. It's an issue in which people show their hand as to how they read the Bible and as to how they want to order their lives.

Homosexuality is an issue that we, too, need to address. And we want to do it in a sensitive and responsible manner. Whatever we may think or feel about the issue, it is first of all a painful reality for a dozen or so people in any good-sized congregation. None of these homosexual persons stood at a crossroad in his or her life at one time and decided that he or she wanted to be something other than heterosexual. The condition, at least, seems to have been foisted on them. For that reason, we need to be very careful and very non-judgmental as we discuss the issue. At the same time, we need to be faithful to the biblical and spiritual guidance that God gives to his people.

The matter will be discussed over two issues of *Calvinist Contact*. We will be listening to what homosexual persons have to tell us, and we will be listening to what heterosexual people want to say about the topic. Editorially, we place the 1973 Acts of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church at the beginning of this first section. We consider it a reliable guideline in terms of understanding the biblical teachings on homosexuality and forming pastoral attitudes towards homosexual persons.

We prefer to use the word "homosexual" as an adjective, not as a noun. We do not think that a homosexual orientation is the essence of a man or a woman's personhood, anymore than a heterosexual orientation is. We are first of all human beings under God. And it is at that level that we need to practise love towards each other in obedience to God.

The readership is invited to take part in this discussion, but we ask that you listen carefully to what each person is saying and that you respond with due sensitivity to people who are homosexual and to the writers who are so graciously making themselves vulnerable by being honest and sincere.

We pray that this humble attempt at taking a close look at the homosexual condition and practice may bring honour to God and healing to our neighbour.

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Loving your homosexual neighbour as yourself

"The glory of God is humans fully alive." St. Irenaeus

Willem Hart

When I came to Toronto to attend the Ontario College of Art, my goal was to become an interior designer. One look at fellow students who also wanted to pursue that profession, however, convinced me that I should switch to graphic design. The reason? There was no way I was going to spend the rest of my life associating with a bunch of gays. That was 1955 and I was a brash young man, well versed in the prejudices of a Reformed background and proud of it.

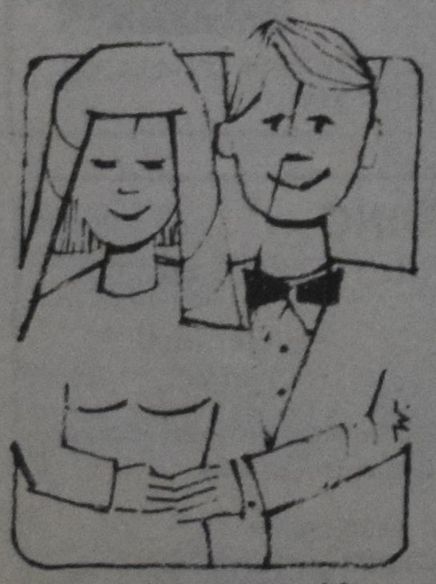
Not long after graduating, I became an elder in the First Christian Reformed Church of Toronto. As part of my task I had to catechise a homosexual young man. He was addicted to angora sweaters and walked different from me. Part of me enjoyed the task, but I was always happy when he left. I was still very young, 25, and I still thought I knew it all.

In the quarter century since, a lot of water has gone under the bridge, and the world has changed. The conservative non-involved innocency of the '50s gave way to the rebellious, hippy, commune-bound '60s (to some, even God was dead), the recessionary '70s and the materialistic, non-involved, yuppy '80s. AIDS has replaced cancer as the foremost illness of concern. Women are asking for, and given, positions of leadership. Hallelujah! And I am not nearly as sure about things as I used to be. And gays are, well, still gay.

Warts and all

My own life, and that of countless contemporaries, no doubt, has not been unaffected by these changes. I graduated from college, was married, had three wonderful children, was divorced and changed church communities. In my hour of need the Reformed community proved to be lacking in support. However, I still retain

"I graduated from college, was married, and had three wonderful children."



a deep and warm regard for my Reformed heritage but found it easier to lick my wounds in another community. And through it all I never lost faith in my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Most of all because I know he never lost faith with me.

"What I've gained is a deeper sense of the mystery of God and the incredible joy of celebration that this tradition offers."

I discovered the Anglo-Catholic tradition which speaks volumes to my artistic heart and being and has deepened my spiritual life immensely. I discovered that faith could be nurtured in different ways. No less rich, just different. I sometimes miss the solid, meaty preaching I grew up on. The form of exegetical preaching, the centrality of the Word (pulpits are always in the centre of a proper Reformed church), that is so much part of the Reformed heritage, is sometimes missing.

But to gain something you often have to lose something else. And the preaching I hear now is often good and stimulating, even though the pulpit is off to the side. What I've gained is a deeper sense of the mystery of God and the incredible joy of celebration that this tradition offers. A celebration of colour, texture, instrumental and oral sound, community and communion. I can celebrate the Lord's Supper seven times a week. I am not asked to go "down into the pit" before each celebration because I know that my Redeemer lives!

It is my great joy and privilege to be an acolyte in this church, an altar-server like Samuel. Besides four services on Sundays there are usually two services every week day. I serve at a service on Saturday mornings and have done this, with few exceptions, for almost 10 years. After the service I visit my mother, and there I always read *Calvinist Contact* if the Royal Mail has been good enough to deliver it. I also read *The Banner*. Through these two publications I keep pretty well up-to-date with my Reformed heritage. It's important to me.

Many times I have wanted to write a letter to the editor of either paper. One such time was when *The Banner*, in a series on the *Heidelberg Catechism*, roundly condemned the use of images in the church for teaching and edification purposes. Can you imagine what that does to an artist, a Christian, who wants to express his love for God in the images he creates? But, dear reader, you know how it is. A temporary flush of opinionated enthusiasm and energy that dissipates after a good night's sleep. We are all so busy doing what we have to do and the impulses are lost in the day-to-day business.

Yours, mine and theirs

But now the issue of our sexuality has been raised in *Calvinist Contact*. I applaud the sensitive way in which C.C. has dealt with this issue. First we've learned that Reformed people, including ministers and elders, are not immune to sexual perversions such as incest. We've been treated to many heart-rending, personal responses and testimonies in this regard.

"The earth is round, not flat."

And in a few issues the matter of homosexuality has had a tentative airing. It started with my good friend (we go back a long way) Bert Witvoet's editorial on the deliberations and decisions by the United Church. It continued with a letter by my brother and best friend, Hendrik Hart, Dr. John Stronks, John van Veen, Dean McRae, "a child of God," and Jack Vos, as well as an article on a conference on sexuality ("Sexuality leads people to seek interconnectedness, say speakers").

I congratulate the letter writers on a decent, Christian, and reasonable tone in their communications. Let's agree to disagree while maintaining respect for each other and leaving room for opinions other than our own.

Bible scholars continue to find new insights, new interpretations that can enlighten us all. But the final answers remain a mystery. Much of what you and I were taught as authoritative and reliable was the result of much study and interpretation, some of it quite recent. It is part of a continuing process of discovery. Just as science progresses and discovers new wonders in God's creation, so we discover new riches in the Bible. The earth is round, not flat.

I often get the feeling that my Reformed brothers and sisters would like to believe that "the Truth" has been stated once and for all, and was deposited in the Reformed confessional documents 400 years ago. Reformation is a process of renewal and re-thinking. You cannot rest on the laurels of Luther and Calvin, nor even S.G. de Graaf and others.

A painful process

What a true reformational process does, inevitably, is cause pain. It's painful to grow up. It's painful to discover that reliable concepts we held dear may no longer be valid. And the process causes many a *faux pas*. We think wrong, we do wrong, we make bad judgments, but we also make some good ones. The adherence to, and adulation of Reformed confessional statements leads many to believe that there is nothing new to discover.

For instance, many orthodox theologians no longer insist that ceremonial or cultic law, civic law, and ethical law are clearly distinguishable. What's ceremonial for some may be ethical/moral for others. Do we eat porkchops? Do we circumcise? Do we sew linen to wool? Do we leave some of the harvest on the field for the poor? Do we pay our workers daily? God's truth is too complex for us to comprehend fully. It cannot be boxed-in and neatly presented as a *fait accompli*.

In regard to Leviticus, the CRC study report on homosexuality (Report 42, 1973) says: "In how far the prohibition of homosexualism is binding on us is therefore a question that remains." (p. 619)

What is of crucial importance is to keep an open mind, to be accepting, loving, to have mercy and compassion and to continue to search for biblical principles of justice. I realize that some scoff at this as being liberal and soft. But the central commandment in the New Testament is: "Love one another."

"I hug them, and I am hugged in return when the occasion calls for it. I've never been 'infected.'"

Dean McRea (C.C., Nov. 18, 1988) expresses his own frustration: "I sincerely hoped that I might find some ambiguity in the Bible, some context in which homosexuality was accepted as OK." It may, or may not be there, but Dean has decided that it isn't. He ends his letter by saying: "... We would set a very dangerous precedent on how to read scripture if we interpret the Bible as accepting homosexuality." Perhaps so, but that, as McRea himself suggests, is no reason not to accept homosexuals.

Judgment

Well, there we are ... our homosexual neighbour. Poor fellow, poor woman. Go and sin no more!

University of Toronto campus minister Derk Pierik, who presented the biblical and theological foundations for consideration of human sexuality at a recent conference on that subject, said "the Bible teaches that the heterosexual male-female nature of human life is central to humans created in the image of God." (C.C., Nov. 18). While I don't want to ascribe to Mr. Pierik anymore than he has been quoted as saying — I wasn't there — I would ask him, would it be wrong for us to say that our homosexual neighbour was also created in the image of God? We are, I presume, talking about the same God. The God who hates nothing that he has created.

Male and female He created them. Can you not say male and male, and female and female He created them? There are rather a lot of us. And all of God's creatures are born with sexual impulses and a need to express those impulses. Would God give sexual impulses

and the need to express them with the intent that some could and others couldn't? Is that reasonable? Is it at least possible that God is as pleased about the loving, committed sexual intimacy of homosexuals as he is about the same sexual intimacy of heterosexuals?

I am thoroughly and devotedly heterosexual. I love this gift that God has granted me. As a sinful human being I have abused it at times. But it is still God's gift. The idea of homosexual activity is decidedly weird to me. I could use stronger language, but you get the point. Has it ever occurred to you that heterosexual intimacy is just as weird to a homosexual? About 10 per cent of any given population is homosexual. This means that in a church of 200 members about 20 of them will have this orientation unless they have already been alienated out of the church. Did God really intend to withhold the gift of intimacy to 10 per cent of the crown of his creation?

Two choices

Today, gays and lesbians have a choice. They can accept what and who they are and affirm their sexuality and thus be at odds with what the church allows, or they can repress and deny their sexuality and live a life devoid of sexual intimacy. It's really a bad choice. For the Christian gay it's a no win situation. Both choices are harmful.

I started this article with a reason for not choosing to be an interior designer. If I had to make that choice today, it would be based on different reasons. In fact, homosexuality would not enter into the decision at all. I have

"Are wheelchair-bound Christians entitled to access to church via a ramp?"

learned that my gay friends are often extraordinarily gifted. Gifted in many areas. The church does itself a disservice by not being more accepting of these singular gifts.

The church I attend today has many homosexual members. Some of them are my good friends and I have experienced the harm that alienation does to them. Some of them are decidedly odd. I am convinced that their oddness is not a result of their orientation, but the result of years of rejection. In my church sexually active homosexuals are accepted as God's creatures. I hug them, and I am hugged in return when the occasion calls for it. I've never been "infected." In my church they are accepted, if not officially, as people who provide leadership (yes, priests). But even my church has a long way to go.

Why is that so? Do homosexuals have horns? Do they eat children? Do they corrupt the morals of heterosexuals? Do they smell different?

Is a paraplegic heterosexual entitled to sexual gratification? How is that accomplished? Should the retarded, or epileptics engage in sexual intimacy? Is a Terry Fox with one leg allowed to run? Are wheelchair-bound Christians entitled to access to church via a ramp? Are these the wrong questions? It is only recently that we are viewing the handicapped as fully part of the human race. Does your church have a ramp? Does your church have a way to be open to homosexuals?

Isn't the worst sin of homosexuals that they are different from you or me? It is far easier for us to ignore the poor person at the liquor store entrance who wants a quarter, than to deal with his problem. I am not necessarily equating homosexuals with cripples, paraplegics, epileptics, the retarded, the poor, etc. All I am saying is that they, like the others, are different from us "normal" people. But what is normal? What we as "straights" suffer from is homophobia, the fear of homosexuality. We fear it only because it is different. Conformity at all cost.

Keeping an open mind

The more I think of the proposition that homosexuality represents a deviation from God's created order, the more I doubt it. Most churches (including the CRC) officially accept the position that homosexuality is an orientation, beyond the responsibility of the person. Whose responsibility is it then? Can we not at least entertain and discuss the idea that it might be God's responsibility, part of the great and unfathomable variety he allows in creation? Did you hear about the species of fish that swims on the Great Barrier Reef in Australia? The male of that species gets pregnant.

I am no Bible scholar and people wiser, deeper and better able will have to discuss the

"It is far easier for us to ignore the poor person at the liquor store entrance who wants a quarter, than to deal with his problem."

biblical implications with you in depth. They will have to be provided that opportunity without our discrimination. They will have to be allowed this opportunity without losing our respect, without losing our community, without losing our support, and without losing their jobs. Why? Because Christian tolerance demands it. Do we have to agree? Not necessarily, but we can listen and evaluate. It is the height of conceit to suppose that any of us have a corner on the truth. But we must never discourage the search for it. And we should let those best qualified have the opportunity to lead us.

The biblical givens on homosexuality are not as absolute as we might think. Homosexuality is never mentioned in the Gospels. Christ himself made no judgment on it. The Old Testament speaks entirely about homosexual aberrations, i.e. heterosexuals practising homosexuality. Take the story of Sodom, where the sin was one of inhospitality. In the context of a desert people, inhospitality meant certain death. When Ezekiel refers to Sodom he writes: "Behold, this was the sin of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters lived in pride, plenty and thoughtless ease; they grew haughty and committed abominations [sexual orgies to bring fertility] before me ...."

And when Jesus refers to Sodom he refers to their sin as inhospitality. He says of those towns that were inhospitable to his disciples: "I tell you on that day [of judgment] Sodom will fare better than that town." Sodomites are those who practise inhospitality. Inhospitality to the poor, the lonely, the homeless and, yes, the homosexuals among us.

Scripture deals with the sin of homosexuality in the context of lustful activity freely chosen by heterosexuals as in Romans 1. Scripture condemns homosexuality and heterosexual activity in a humanly destructive manner, such as idolatry, prostitution, promiscuity, rape, seduction of children or inhospitality. The gym teacher who assaults little boys is as wrong as the choir master who does the same to little girls. In spite of our homophobic tendency to believe that the corruption of same-sex minors is rampant among homosexuals, the evidence is that these aberrations are statistically more common among heterosexuals.

Nowhere in the Bible is there a negative or condemnatory reference to homosexual orientation in the context of a loving committed relationship. One of the best sources (besides the aforementioned CRC report) is a book by Robin Scroggs *(The New Testament and Homosexuality,* Fortress Press, 1983). His simple conclusion is that "biblical judgments against homosexuality are not relevant to today's debate ... not because the Bible is not authoritative, but simply because it does not address the issues involved" (p. 127).

A plea for understanding

Does that give you pause for thought? Does that give you an itch to at least read about and study new insights? Insights from "straight" theologians? It does for me! As a product of my upbringing, I, too, still have many questions about gay orientation. I read in Genesis that "a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife." I don't read anywhere that men or women shall leave their father and mother and cleave unto their male or female friends. But does its absence preclude its possibility? I also read in Genesis that every human has need of a companion.

Robin Scroggs suggests, "Let no one think that I am trying to turn Paul into an advocate of contemporary homosexuality. He might still be opposed. The point is there is no way of knowing" (p. 128). In spite of its final conclusions, the CRC Report 42 presents similar views.

Finally I draw your attention to Isaiah 56 which promises that after the Messiah comes and the new covenant is established, those who are sexually different, those who were formerly excluded from the community of God, will have a special place in the house of the Lord and "an everlasting name which shall not be cut off."

Again, I write not as a scholar. I plead for others to take up this discussion, professionals such as theologians, Christian ethicists, psychiatrists, psychologists, therapists and fellow Christians who have a homosexual orientation, to enlarge upon this theme. What I am definitely not looking for is letters by lay people quoting existing positions and attacking my views on technical grounds. My views are my views and are, of course, not authoritative. This issue will never be resolved by arguing with each other. We should search for new, responsible insights ... together.

I plead only for my gay brothers and sisters whom I love, and who, in my view, have a point when they speak of their right to their sexuality and therefore its intimate expression. I plead not for sin to flourish, but that for all of us grace may abound. I plead not for sin, but for the redemption in Christ which makes us free.

Willem Hart is a Toronto graphic designer whose artistic skills have helped promote countless Christian causes.

There is a way out!

Name withheld

As a boy, I had already begun to look or stare at attractive boys. In my teenage years, a crush, or even a fixation, would come about as I noticed handsome men. Although this was latent homosexuality I never gave it much thought. For all I knew, it was just a passing phase that my peers were also going through. I did not recognize it as homosexuality.

As the years rolled by, it dawned on me that only men turned me on, and that heterosexual sex was utterly repulsive to me.

That is when I entered a deep spiritual valley. Was I not among the elect? Was I damned? After all, God had created people to be male and female. My imagination ran wild. I could see myself cast into the lake of fire and brimstone. Had God not poured fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah? I felt like a freak, an outcast, spiritual junk ripe for destruction. I felt that way even before I practised homosexuality.

Emotional hell

As I grew up, I always felt rejected by my father. In fact, I was afraid of him. Deep down in his heart, he probably loved me; but it never came out. I do not remember him ever kissing or embracing me. He never spent time with me. I got the impression he was happy with my brothers and sisters, but that there was something really wrong with me.

My mother was an insecure authority figure. I was close to her, but it was never a normal closeness that I could feel good about. Life at home was an emotional hell.

I had no friendships to speak of. Penpals and books were my "friends." I didn't feel good enough about myself to form friendships.

The pit of indulgence

Two years before I got married, I had quite a few sexual encounters with a minister and a church organist (not from a Reformed denomination). The pastor had a wife and family. He engaged my sympathy somewhat by sharing, for example, that he "got next to nothing in the parsonage" and that I must be a very lonely guy with physical needs.

I don't believe in the "Adam-Eve-serpent game" of passing the buck. We can't blame others on Judgment Day, so we may as well get it straight here that we *choose* to sin. What sense would it make for me to say, "This liberal minister made passes at me, so did the organist; that's why I sinned." I have always loved the broken, contrite heart of David who mourningly said, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned."

My indulgence in homosexual practice lasted only half-a-year in all.

Only for normal people

I left the Christian Reformed Church because of a feeling of not fitting in and hoping that through the power of the Holy Spirit I could overcome what I could not do in my own strength. The Christian Reformed Church is a perfect church for normal people. But if you're homosexual, for instance, to whom do you go?

I remember walking past the house of a fellow church member, who was sitting on the front porch with his wife and company. "I'll bet you anything, he's a ...." (I will not write down the terrible name he used). I did not respond and he did not realize I had heard it.

At another time, I was attending an evangelism committee meeting. Out of the clear blue sky, the minister of the church said in my presence, "I think John (not my name) is a homo." I felt like walking up to him and slapping his face. But the Lord must have been in control.

Those who have the courage to share their problems get to hear such things as: "Live with it," "Who can you hurt by being homosexual?" "Find a man with a black moustache." No hope of deliverance was offered.

I desired to change and prayed to that effect. Another couple arranged for me to go on a blind date. About a year later, I married the woman with whom I had that date. I did it in faith. Why do I say "in faith"? I still had my homosexual tendencies and desires. Even to this day, they have not completely been overcome. Sin rubs off on you, and even the blood of Christ does not remove the consequences of sin. I confessed my homosexuality to my wife, since the scriptures tell us to confess our faults to one another, that we may be healed. Marriage ended my homosexual practice.

I want to make clear that no miracle took place. Our sex life in marriage would probably have been much better and more frequent had I been a normal heterosexual man in the first place. Even though the Lord forgives, our lack of self-forgiveness and inability to forget has a certain debilitating effect on what should have been a most beautiful consummation of love. The Lord, in his providence, provided me with a low-key, undemanding wife. This is true in the sexual as well as in other areas of our marriage.

More than I deserve

Today we have three children. The family of five or six that we discussed before marriage never materialized. But I am grateful to the Lord that he has blessed me beyond all that I could ask or think. When I first got married, I believed the Serpent's lie: "Because of all the abomination, the oral and the anal sex in which you engaged, your wife will be cursed with infertility. No children for you, you rotten sinner!"

Psalm 40:2 taught me otherwise: "He brought me up also out of the horrible pit, and established my goings."

In analyzing the cause of homosexuality, I have concluded that, just as we should not blame upbringing and environment, much less God or Satan, for our pride, jealousy, hatred, and the like, neither should homosexuals and lesbians blame such factors for their condition. Of course, being distant from your father, dominated by your mother, having a hormonal imbalance may water and flourish the seeds of homosexuality, but those seeds had to be there in the first place. What I am saying is that I assumed responsibility for the way I was. And at that point, there was hope for me.

This sense of responsibility is what Paul appeals to in 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, *nor homosexual offenders*, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers will inherit the Kingdom of God. And that is what some of you *were*. But you were *washed*, you were *sanctified*, you were *justified* in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of our God."

The name of the author, though known to the editor, has been withheld to protect his family.

Sodom and Gomorrah revisited

The following is a sermon which was preached at First Christian Reformed Church, Toronto, Dec. 4, 1988, by Derk Pierik, campus pastor at the University of Toronto. The sermon is based on Genesis 19.

Derk Pierik

The Christian community is under great pressure to change its attitude towards homosexuals, particularly towards those who are willing to live in a one-to-one relationship. The Bible is less clear on the subject of homosexual behaviour than many have thought. Even when it speaks in specific commandments its meaning is time-bound and often debatable. But more often than not the Bible reveals God's truth in story form. And stories do not give us a blow-by-blow critique of the behaviour of the people in the stories. We must make up our own minds about their moral rightness or wrongness. The story about Sodom and Gomorrah is no exception. Let's look at it.

The story is sandwiched into the life story of Abraham. That's revealing. The writer contrasts two ways of living, Abraham's and Lot's. Abraham chooses to live in Canaan, the promised land. Lot chooses to live in the lush Jordan valley. Prosperity will be a sure thing there. But there is a risk; he will have to live close to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and they are notorious for their wickedness, chapter 13 tells us.

Chapter 18 records a very pleasant meeting between Abraham and three men, one of whom turns out to be God. Abraham goes all-out to welcome his guests and prepares a meal for them. Almost as if to reward him for his hospitality, the Lord promises Abraham a son by the same time next year. After the meal God says to Abraham, "The outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin so grievous that I will go down and see if what they have done is as bad as the outcry that has reached me. If not, I will know."

Abraham senses that things look deadly serious for Sodom. He pleads for its survival. Abraham's plea shows his compassion for the wicked people of Sodom. God's patient listening to Abraham's almost impertinent prayer shows his amazing grace. The God who destroys Sodom and Gomorrah has a surprisingly soft heart! When Abraham has bargained God all the way down from 50 to 10 righteous people as being sufficient to spare Sodom and Gomorrah, God and Abraham part as good friends.

Hospitality meant life

Meanwhile the other two men — angels — arrive at the city of Sodom. The story of Abraham's hospitality repeats itself with Lot. Lot invites the men into his house and prepares a meal. They eat and then settle down for a pleasant evening. It is hard to overestimate the importance of such hospitality in those days. Travelers had to contend with wild animals and thieves, without the protection of law and safe shelter. Hospitality could mean the difference between life and death. So in the Bible, hospitality is at the heart of neighbourly love, and no doubt the violation of hospitality looms large in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Until this point the story of Lot matches that of Abraham. But well into the night the pleasant scene turns ugly. All the men of Sodom surround the house. They knock on the door demanding sex with Lot's guests. Male to male gang-rape in the making, in other words. Lot is shocked. He steps outside and tries to talk some sense into the men of Sodom. He is willing to do almost anything to protect his guests. In a moment of appalling compromise he even offers the menacing crowd his two virgin daughters. The offer is rejected. His neighbours threaten him with frightful consequences if he does not cater to their gross demands.

There is some dispute over what the men of Sodom really wanted. The original text does not literally say that they wanted to have sex with the two men. It says that they demanded to "know" the men. Some commentators say that there was no demand for sex here but a request to get acquainted with the men. However, when Lot talks to them about his two daughters as never having slept with a man, meaning they are virgins, Lot uses that same word. "They have never *known* a

Continued on page 13 ...

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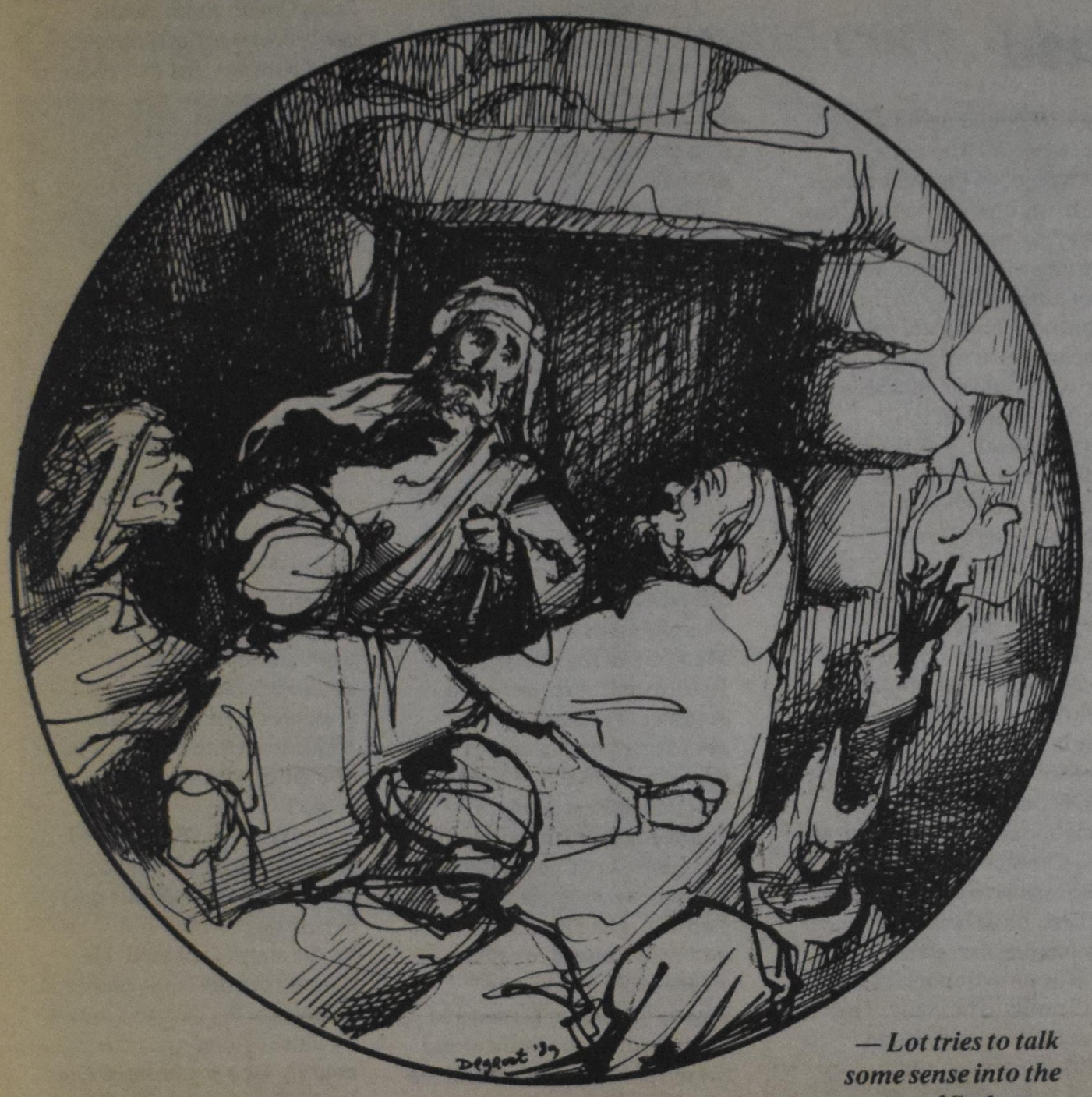

— Lot tries to talk some sense into the men of Sodom —

... continued from page 12.

man," he says. It seems quite consistent, then, to conclude that sex is what the men were after, violent male-with-male sex. The story does not tell us that all the men of Sodom were homosexuals. But it does implicate all of them in what happened.

The violent nature of their intentions deserves special attention. Neither the Bible nor modern research would want to suggest that rape is only a perverted sex act. Rape, and thus homosexual rape, is especially an act of *violence*. It happens in situations of war and in prisons, for instance. A Vietnam veteran once told a group of us chaplains of his being captured by two Viet Cong soldiers. They raped him, and the rape was an act of conquest and of humiliation of an enemy. On the other hand, I think we go too far if we say rape is *only* an act of violence and not also an act of perverted sex. I would say it is both.

Lot's protest proves of no avail. The two men have to pull him back into the house for his own protection. The angels then strike the men of Sodom with blindness so that they cannot find the door. In frustration they give up. Next morning Lot's guests urge him and his family to flee for their lives. When Lot, his wife and his two daughters are well on their way, the Lord destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

When righteousness rules

The contrast between Abraham's and Lot's stories is clear. In Abraham's house guests are safe. Righteousness rules Abraham's house. Lot's house stands on the brink of evil. Guests enter Lot's house at the peril of abuse or even death. The blame for this evil falls directly on the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Indirectly it falls on Lot and on his reckless decision to move so dangerously close to the fleshpots of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The legacy of Sodom and Gomorrah lives on in the 20th century.

The consequences of Lot's choice are devastating for his family line as well. After the dust of Sodom and Gomorrah has settled, God continues his covenant only with Abraham and his promised son Isaac. The conclusion of chapter 19 tells us that Lot also receives two sons, by his own daughters. Moab and Ben-Ammi are their names, and in due time the nations that come forth from them become the arch-enemies of God and of Israel. The legacy of Sodom and Gomorrah lives on in Lot's family line.

The legacy of Sodom and Gomorrah lives on in the 20th century, in the form of two opposing paths of life. One, called "the broad road" by Jesus, leads to destruction. It is a most popular road. The other is called "the narrow road." It alone leads to life. But it is "the road less travelled."

We must not be simplistic in drawing conclusions from this story. Unfortunately the story of Sodom and Gomorrah is too often interpreted as exclusively a story about God's heavy hand coming down on homosexuals. History has given the name "Sodomy" to homosexual acts and so heaped on homosexuals all the blame for God's anger against Sodom and Gomorrah.

But quite significantly, sexual sins are hardly mentioned by other biblical writers who refer to Sodom and Gomorrah. And the measure of Sodom's sins was already full before God and his angels arrived at Abraham's front door. In Genesis 13:13 already we read: "Now the men of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the Lord." So the gross intent of the men of Sodom on that fateful last day was not the cause of God's fury the next day. You might say it was already too late for Sodom when those three men came to visit Abraham.

Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for far more than what happened that day. Ezekial 16:49 tells us: "Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen." Jeremiah 23:14, comparing Israel's prophets to the people of Sodom, says this: "... Among the prophets of Israel I have seen something horrible: They commit adultery and live a lie. They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns away from his wickedness. They are like Sodom to me; the people of Jerusalem like Gomorrah."

So what were the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah according to other Bible writers? Well, they included religious hypocrisy, protection and support of evildoers, adultery, arrogance, materialism, exploitation of and lack of concern for the poor, other "detestable things," whatever they were, and yes, violation of the rules of hospitality. For all those sins God destroyed them.

Familiar sins

Does not that list make Sodom and Gomorrah seem familiar to us? Are not those the sins of our generation? Are we better than they? It is food for thought that the biblical writers repeatedly tell God's people that they have sunk lower than Sodom and Gomorrah. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah forces us to ask the question: "How do we compare, we 20th century Christ believers and the societies we have built?" "How does the God of Abraham and Lot rate us?" "Can North America, can the city or place where you live cast stones at Sodom and Gomorrah?" We condemn ourselves as we rightly condemn the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. With the judgment we hand out to others we will be judged ourselves, says Jesus.

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is God's way of dealing with a society that has degenerated into almost total decadence. As the story of the New Jerusalem captures the highest reaches of human perfection according to the Bible, so the story of Sodom and Gomorrah symbolizes the lowest degradation to which a human community can sink.

This story of homosexual attempted gang-rape, then, is only one illustration of Sodom's evil, just as the Holocaust is only one terrible illustration of the evils of Hitler's Germany. Much more was rotting in the state of Sodom than is recorded here. The events told in the story are only the revealing tip of an iceberg of human depravity.

Do not ignore the fury of God's anger against Sodom and Gomorrah. It shouts its own message. Reader, beware. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is a clear sign that the God of Abraham is not mocked. Patient he is, tolerant even for a long time. He bends over backwards, as it were, to spare a city or civilization. But there are limits to his tolerance. Then hot destruction follows. We may well shiver with fright as we contemplate that kind of God. But, simultaneously, we may rejoice that God means business with our sins. His fury is the other side of his faithfulness to what is good. It is also an example for us. Woe to us if we make peace with sin and evil.

Drawing conclusions

What conclusions must we draw, then? Since this story in particular is used to condemn homosexuality I will first look at that issue. Does the story condemn all homosexual behaviour, including that of a permanent homosexual relationship? In keeping with what I said earlier about the nature of stories I agree that this story obviously does not in so many words tell us that even a permanent homosexual relationship is forbidden. Homosexual gang-rape is as far removed from a faithful homosexual relationship as heterosexual gang-rape is from a loving marriage relationship.

But that does not settle the issue. The story does not tell us either, in so many words, that homosexual gang-rape is wrong. Yet most of us will feel intuitively that the story and its context do, in fact, condemn the attempted gang-rape as a most despicable deed. But why? Because it is a homosexual act? Because it is a perverted sex act? Because it is a violent act? Probably for all those reasons.

But also because it violates the rules of hospitality. There is something important we should note here. We may look at the attempted gang-rape as primarily a heinous sex act. Yet the people of Israel probably condemned it as much as an unforgivable breach of Hebrew hospitality, though not ignoring its sexual perversion. So they and we condemn the same act, but likely for different reasons.

If we do conclude that homosexual gang-rape is condemned in the story, may we go on to decide that the story condemns all homosexual behaviour? My intuition is to say "yes." But there is a lot less ground in the story for that conclusion. It is by bringing in other biblical statements that I conclude it. There are, significantly, only a few Bible passages that even mention homosexual behaviour, and the implications of most of them are being hotly disputed. But for me the cumulative message of all the passages, despite admitted difficulties of interpretation, adds up to the Bible's disapproval of all homosexual behaviour.

To put it differently, it goes

Continued on page 14 ...

Sodom and Gomorrah revisited

... continued from page 13.
against the general tone of scripture, I believe, to say that though same-sex gang-rape is clearly condemned, a permanent homosexual relationship is biblically defensible. Leviticus 18:22, to mention just one biblical reference, says: "Do not lie with a man as one lies with a woman; that is detestable." Assuming that this verse says what it seems to say, then the Bible forbids all homosexual behaviour as such. So the deeds of the men of Sodom are condemned, for, among other things, the violation of Lev. 18:22 and other such prohibitions. This is a particularly strong argument in view of the fact that the Bible does not draw a distinction between one homosexual act and another.

Does not the Bible's story about Sodom's destruction also call our attention to the abuse men have heaped on women ever since the garden of Eden? Is it mere coincidence that only the "men" of Sodom are mentioned in this horror story? Could it be that the women and children of Sodom were relatively more innocent in their male-dominated culture?

Sins match our own

We have seen that when the biblical writers think back about Sodom and Gomorrah, sexual sin is not what they remember most. That's important. Otherwise those of us who are relatively innocent of sexual sin might pass over the story as though it had nothing to say to us. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed also for materialism, greed, arrogance, complicity with evil, exploitation, oppression and neglect of the poor. All those sins match our own.

Can North American Christians claim innocence of their culture's evils? We are not told that every last resident of Sodom and Gomorrah chose the road to wickedness. But all of them were wiped out! If Sodom and Gomorrah were like our society, then wicked people were, at least in the beginning, in a minority there. But their "leaven" poisoned the rest. The story of Sodom and Gomorrah signals to us the real danger of "innocent" people taking over the bad habits of their surrounding culture. The danger is no less threatening today. Christians are as likely to be swept along with the spirit of their new age.

In applying this story to our own lives we must make an important choice. One increasingly popular notion is that because we are all implicated in the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah we better all stop judging each other. Does not Jesus say, "Judge not that you be not judged?" That's how some Christians come to the conclusion of saying that we should not judge, that is condemn, for instance, permanent homosexual relationships.

Some are convinced that Paul means just that when he says in Rom. 2:1 ff.: "You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things."

In my opinion neither Jesus nor Paul means that because we ourselves are sinners we should not judge others. On the contrary, both Paul and Jesus mean that as we judge others, so we should simultaneously judge ourselves. It is hypocritical to judge others for their homosexual behaviour if we do not also judge ourselves for our heterosexual misbehaviour, greed, materialism, lovelessness, neglect of the poor, etc.

Healthy self-criticism has a way of softening our judgment of others. Jesus tells us to take the beam out of our own eye before we attempt to take the sliver out of the eyes of our neighbour. The very nature of the Christian faith makes it impossible to avoid judging others, but it helps if we begin by judging ourselves.

The most important point still needs to be made. The essense of the Christian faith is not first of all a question of what we may or may not do. Nor is it first of all a question of finding fault, with ourselves or with others. The heart of the gospel is that Jesus Christ has paid for the sins of the whole world, and has come to make all things new. We are offered not only forgiveness of our sins, but also the promise of God's renewing presence in our hearts and lives, and in our human community.

Entrance into Christ's newness is by way of repentance of all that remains of the old life. The call for our repentance covers all the sins of Sodom, from neglect of the poor to sexual misbehaviour, heterosexual and homosexual. Beyond Christ's invitation to "go, sin no more" lies the promise of God's remaking of the lives of all who enter by the narrow gate. I do not want to be simplistic about the possibility of homosexual people reversing their sexual inclination. But neither can I find biblical justification for exempting them from Christ's call to new life or for excluding them from his promise of restoration.

Admittedly the process of Christ's renewal takes more than a lifetime. Until we arrive at the final destination all of us carry with us the scars of our past sins and the pain of our present ones.

Thanks be to God that we may know that in the final analysis we are not saved by good behaviour but by faith in Jesus Christ. Faith means many things in the Bible. At heart it means that we believe in the forgiveness of sins and that we are resolved to walk in Christ's footsteps, in new obedience, through his power. No one is exempted from that call to new obedience.

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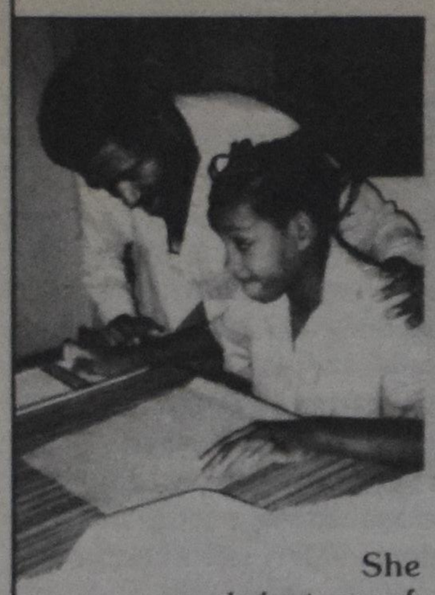

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Pastoral letter

Concern

Leonard Schalkwyk

The other day I went to attend a meeting of the Committee of Concerned Members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America. I was concerned about this meeting of the concerned, because I had heard that they were schismatic — and encouraged members to leave the Christian Reformed Church, as the apostate Babylon. I had heard that the movement aimed to cause a wedge in congregations, separating the concerned and unconcerned, the faithful and the unfaithful, the elect and the reprobate.

This all concerned me very much. Even the reformer Martin Luther never left the church; he was excommunicated. The great reformer Abraham Kuyper never left the church either. As one of 80 elders, he was deposed.

Ministers especially have a holy obligation to stay at the helm of the ship, but "the crew" must also be faithful. Jumping off the ship of the church brings much misery. It causes family disruption and spiritual calamities. It is astounding in what swampy waters ship jumpers suddenly find themselves. You can find them in churches ranging from ultra-orthodox to fundamentalist, to Pentecostal churches and even in cults.

I think this is a result of disobedience. Fear, despair, bitterness often is at the root of such erratic behaviour. Even if a church is not perfect, loyalty in Christ will bring great rewards.

Even starting a new congregation within the Christian Reformed Church, because of a different opinion, is the wrong thing to do, be it from the right or from the left. Here in Classis Toronto we have seen too much of that; small congregations formed by some people of the same conviction or philosophy. We also have seen some disband after a while.

Well, all this explains why with mixed feelings I went to a public meeting of the Concerned. Would we be called to "come out from among them?" To my pleasant surprise, the opposite was stressed.

It was pointed out that anyone leaving the Christian Reformed Church would not be able to be a member of this association anymore, since it comprises the "concerned members in the Christian Reformed Church." As long as you are in, you have a right to speak.

Speaker Rev. Ed Knott of Grand Rapids, Michigan, proved to be a moderate man, even though he was not moderately concerned. He pointed out the many blessings received in the past and present by those belonging to this church. One by one he covered the blessings and praised God for them.

However, he was concerned, mostly about the erosion of the authority of scripture. He did not apologize for pointing to some serious leaks in the ship of the church. The erosion of the authority of scripture was evident to him from a new explanation of scripture, which seeks to make scripture say things it had not said before. This "ventriloquism" he saw, for instance, in the creation/evolution debate.

Rev. Knott also saw this erosion in interpretations that *make* scripture allow the installation of female officebearers. He saw it in the minimizing of the antithesis, the lack of expositional preaching, the liturgical movement and in less doctrinal instruction in catechism classes.

To him, the entrance of these rodents are but symptoms of the fact that some stones in the walls of Zion are breaking down.

Rev. Knott called those present at this crowded meeting not to break the church apart, but to call the church to be faithful. He especially called elders to speak their minds and be faithful at classis and synod. He wanted them to beware of peer pressure.

The strangest thing about the meeting was to me the hush that came over the listeners. They realized that the speaker was deeply touched himself, as if he were telling us about his mother, who was suffering from sickness. His kindness touched us and made real to us the task of "reformation in this generation."

Leonard Schalkwyk is pastor of the Christian Reformed Church in Springdale, Ont.

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Marian Van Til, page editor

Ontario communities become corn bagging enthusiasts

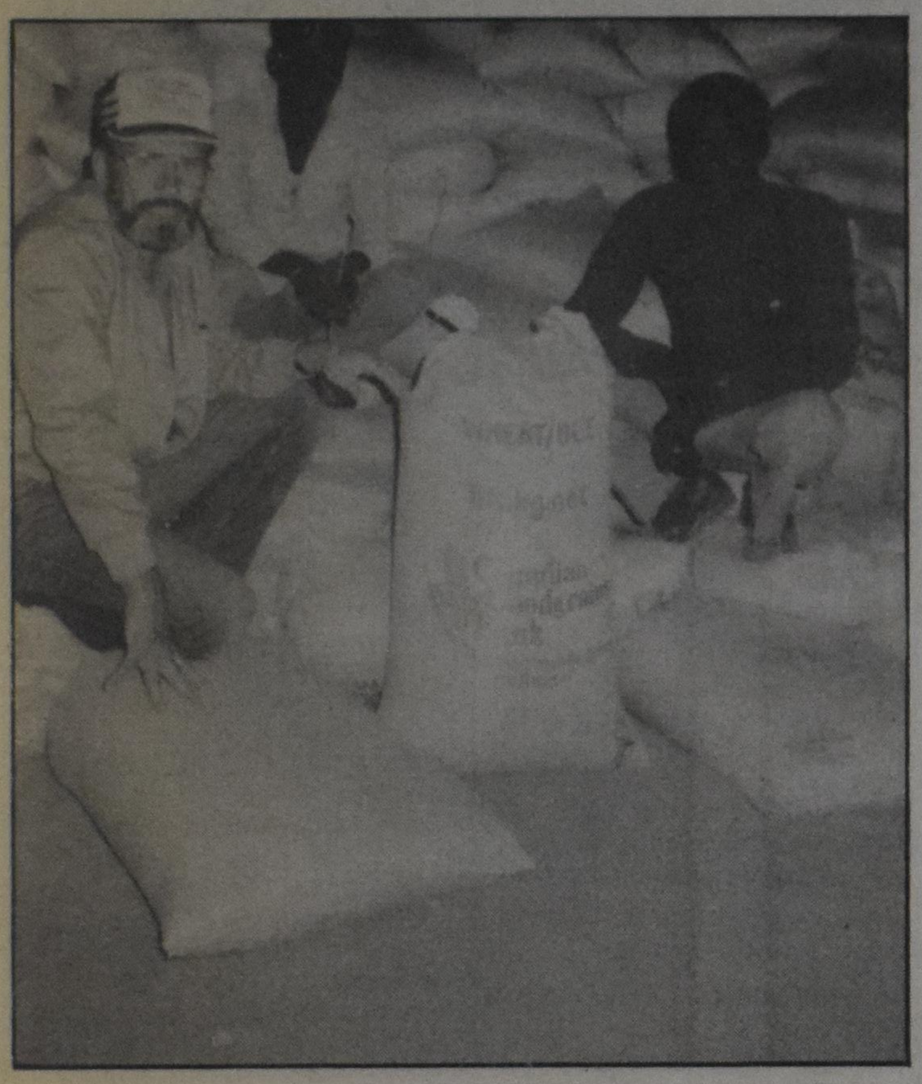

Photo: courtesy CFB

Tony and Pat Postman, a volunteer Alberta farm couple, went to troubled Sudan and Ethiopia aboard the "Catherine M" to oversee the off-loading of Canadian Foodgrains Bank grain shipments. Pictured here is Tony with local men at Port Sudan.

WINNIPEG, Man. (CFB) — "It's becoming the social event of the year," said one volunteer. Community spirit and concern for people in need recently brought together hundreds of volunteers in seven southern Ontario communities to bag 40,000 sacks of corn destined for Mozambique.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank, an interchurch agency, was the chief organizer of the 1989 "Corn for Mozambique" drive.

In the Glencoe and Alvinston district southwest of London, Hugh MacKellar reported a "very enthusiastic" community response from Ontario's "heartland." Using cash donations from churches and individuals to buy the corn, 100 volunteers, mostly farmers, turned out on February 28 and March 1 at the Alvinston Co-op.

Working in two-hour shifts, they weighed and bagged 133 tons of corn in 50 kg sacks, and then loaded them onto trucks bound for port. "We didn't work them too hard," said MacKellar, adding that lunches and coffee were served between shifts by area women. He said the drive has indirectly become a church outreach program because some who normally wouldn't be seen in church showed up to help bag corn. "I'm really pleased with the response," he said. "Our pitch was, 'Who can't spare two hours for one day?'"

"There was more (community) response with less effort this year," said Floyd Evans in Uxbridge, 40 km northeast of Toronto. Good connections with 15 area churches, informative posters and a supportive local newspaper, all contributed to motivate would-be volunteers. Over 150 attended the bagging operation over a six-day period, March 6-11. The local Co-op offered its facilities in the afternoons and evenings, including supplies and the help of two staff. The week-long effort netted 6,000 bags or 300 tons of corn. "With a bunch of farmers, we can bag 12½ tons an hour," boasted Evans. Volunteers from urban centres participated as well, usually during the evening shifts.

Other communities in Ontario's farmbelt who contributed to the unique "Corn for Mozambique" Drive included Oxford County, Harrington, Hensall/Seaforth, Kerwood and Mitchell. Volunteers from Oxford County brought in the lion's share by bagging a whopping 1,100 tons of corn.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank is very pleased that enough support, both financial and muscle, was pooled to achieve its overall goal of 2,000 tons. (The 40,000 sacks bagged can fill 40 railway boxcars.) The people of Mozambique, however, are the real winners. The corn bagged in February and March is earmarked for emergency food aid projects in that southeastern African country. Because of the country's raging civil war, many have fled their home villages and are now living in makeshift reception camps, in need of food: Distribution of the Canadian corn will be carefully supervised by the Canadian Council of Mozambique, representing a coalition of church denominations, and several other church groups. Logistical support is enjoyed from the government of Mozambique relief agency.

The Canadian Foodgrains Bank partners include the Canadian Baptist Federation, Canadian Lutheran World Relief, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee of Canada, Mennonite Central Committee of Canada, the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the United Church of Canada, Church of the Nazarene Canada, and the Evangelical Church in Canada.

Missionaries freed in Nepal after spreading gospel

KATMANDU, Nepal (EP) — A Canadian and an American were released from a Nepalese prison March 1 after an October arrest for "preaching Christianity and causing a disturbance to Hinduism," an offense punishable by six years in prison.

Earlier reports indicated that the two, Merv Budd, 27, of London, Ontario, and Dave McBride, 33, of Columbia, Pennsylvania, would possibly serve up to a year before facing trial. The Nepalese legal system is known for leaving its accused in prison for lengthy periods of time before trials. However, the four-month prison stay was considerably less than expected.

Nepal, a country of 16 million, is the only officially Hindu kingdom in the world and Christian evangelism is strictly prohibited there. At present nearly 200 Nepalese are in prisons awaiting trial on charges of evangelism or "changing religion." It is unlawful for Nepalese to convert from the religion of their forebears.

McBride and Budd, missionaries with Operation Mobilization, were making a routine trip from Katmandu in the eastern part of the country across the countryside to encourage local believers and to distribute Christian literature. The practice is known as "low-key evangelism." As they neared the end of their trek, they stopped at a police check point as required. Police arrested the two when they discovered the literature. The literature was confiscated, as were some cassette tapes.

Bibles for the World translates Bible into new language

PASADENA, Calif. (WEIS) — Bibles For The World, headquartered in Wheaton, Ill., has announced it has completely translated the Bible into the Meitei language and plans distribution soon to northeast India. The Meitei tribe is made up of some one million Hindus in the states of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Another 500,000 Meitei live in neighbouring Burma.

Tribal leaders, both Christian and non-Christian, hail the translation as a history-making event that will bring their families back together again. They base this assumption on the fact that the Bible will be printed in the Roman alphabet, a language known by both older and younger Meitei, instead of in the Bengali script, which is not well known among their younger people.

The first printing of 5,000 hard-cover editions is under way. Another 200,000 soft-cover editions are planned for distribution later this year. Evangelism, ministry and follow-up will be conducted by trained leaders from among Bibles For The World representatives, based on a model of evangelism developed in the neighbouring tribe of the Hmar, which was completely evangelized in one generation. The Hmar, previously known as a fierce headhunting tribe, is now known as a fervent missionary-minded people.

In a related story, the Bible organization has shipped more than 128,000 Bibles to the South African township of Soweto for house-to-house distribution there by local missions groups and churches.

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OBITUARIES
Obituaries should be composed as they are to appear in *Calvinist Contact*. A sheet with information sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.
The $35.00 rate for obituaries covers any length up to six column inches. Calvinist Contact reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $10.00 per column inch.

NEWLYWEDS
Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in Calvinist Contact will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only $15.00! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose $15.00 and the couple's future address.

Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd.
4-261 Martindale Rd.,
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.
Phone: (416) 682-8311
FAX: (416) 682-8313

Births

VANDERVEEN:
Julie is pleased to announce the birth of her sister, HEIDI ADRIENNE, born Mar. 23, 1989, weighing 7 lbs, 9 oz. A second daughter for Anno and Grace VanderVeen (nee Snieder). Julie and mom thank daddy for all his love and support.
Home address: 539 Woodlawn Rd., Welland, ON L3C 3K2.

Marriages

ROFFEL-ROORDA:
Frank and Jane Roorda of Dorchester, Ont., are delighted to announce that another daughter, through marriage, will be added to our family. Her name is MILDRED JENNIFER Roffel, oldest daughter of Harry and Reina Roffel of Guelph, Ont. She will become the wife of our son, MARK BRADLEY ROORDA on Saturday, May 13, 1989, D.V., 3 p.m. at the First Chr. Ref. Church, Guelph, Ont. Rev. J. Kuntz of Kitchener officiating. Congratulations to you both. Welcome to our family, Milly!

For Sale

Learn to play
KLAVARSKRIBO
Organ or Piano
- 3 times faster than with the conventional notes
- well-proven European system
- no teacher necessary.
Send $29.95 (plus 75 cents postage and handling) to:
Keyboard Script Enterpr.
871 Erin Place
Edmonton, AB T5T 1M6
Phone (403) 481-1586
and receive your first five lessons. (add $1.50 for catalogue; money-back guaranteed)

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Bertus and Dora De Vries (nee Denekamp) on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Emmererfscheidenveen
1939 May 22 1989
With joy and thanksgiving to our God we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

BERTUS and DORA DE VRIES
(nee Denekamp)

It is our prayer that God will continue to bless you, Mom and Dad, with many more years together with all of us.
Luke & Theresa De Vries — Ottawa, Ont.
Hennie & Ed Vander Veer — Ottawa, Ont.
Trynie De Vries — Toronto, Ont.
Harry & Erna De Vries — Ancaster, Ont.
Albert De Vries — Jasper, Alta.
Gary & Anita De Vries — Langley, B.C.
13 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.
An open house will be held on Saturday, May 20, 1989, from 2-4 p.m. at Calvin Chr. Ref. Church on Merivale Rd., Ottawa, Ont.
Home address: 27 Meadowlands Dr., Nepean, ON K2G 2R3.

"I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you." (Ps. 32:8)
We thank God that he has watched over our parents and grandparents

JAMES (Jentje) and WILMA (Willemke) BERGSTRA
(nee Bouma)

during their 40 years of marriage. We pray that God will bless you and keep you for many years to come.
Mary & Dick Both — Owen Sound, Ont.
Marianne, Suzanne, Jared, Aaron
Stuart & Susan Bergstra-Glover — Shallow Lake, Ont.
Jamie, Findlay, Evan
Gary & Fran Bergstra-Exel — Shallow Lake, Ont.
Tom & Wilma Bergstra — Sarnia, Ont.
Caitlin, Peter
Raymond & Marilyn Bergstra — Edmonton, Alta.
To celebrate this occasion, an open house will be held at the Park Head Community Hall on Saturday, May 6, 1989, from 2:00 - 4:30 p.m.
Home address: R.R.#1, Shallow Lake, ON N0H 2K0.

For Sale

Read: HUNGER in HOLLAND
by Cornelia Fuykschot.
A vivid depiction of life in Holland during the German occupation ('40 - '45).
Send name and address plus $24.95 to: **OLIM Press, Box 102, Gananoque, ON K7G 2T6. Canada.**

Anniversaries

1939 May 17 1989
With gratitude to God we announce the 50th wedding anniversary of our parents

CORNELIS and JOHANNA P. CORNELISSE
(nee Van Schaik)

Adrian & Tina Cornelisse — Alliston, Ont.
Herb & Hinke Cornelisse — Coldwater, Ont.
Cory & Ria Cornelisse — Sunnidale Corners, Ont.
John & Carry Cornelisse — Regina, Sask.
Bill & Sue Cornelisse — Goodwood, Ont.
Ron & Kathy Cornelisse — Stoney Creek, Ont.
Congratulations and love from your children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.
Open house will be held May 6, 1989, from 2:00-4:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church, corner of Hugel Ave. and First St., Midland, Ont.

1964 May 2 1989
"And let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us: and establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." (Ps. 90:17)
With thankfulness to God, we, the children and grandchild, wish to announce the 25th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

ALBERT and FREDA KIERS
(nee De Vries)

We pray for God's continued blessings on you, Mom and Dad.
With love from your children:
Tony Kiers
Brian & Wendy Kremer
Brittany Catherina
Jerry Kiers
Marita Kiers & Eugene Versteeg (boyfriend)
Laura Kiers
We invite you to celebrate this special occasion with us at an open house reception on June 10, 1989, in the Wellandport Community Centre.
Home address: R.R.#3, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0.

For Sale

COOKBOOKS!!!!
Perfect gift for mom on Mother's Day.
- Over 200 recipes
- Easy & well-loved
$5.00 plus $1.50 shipping and handling.
Write:
Providence YP's
c/o Dianne Hellinga
4850 Spring Creek Rd.
R.R.#1, Vineland, ON L0R 2C0
Proceeds to Turning Point Girls Home.

Anniversaries

1959 May 8 1989
With thanksgiving to God we hope to celebrate the 30th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents

COR and DIEN LANGENDOEN
(nee Prinsen)

We thank God for the years he has given you together and pray that he will grant you many more.
With love:
Andre & Karen
Danielle, Rueben
Stephanie
Jenneke & Leo (fiance)
Denise & Rob (boyfriend)
Christopher
Home address: 700 Lake St., St. Catharines, ON L2N 4J5.

St. Thomas Listowel
1959 May 2 1989
"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Prov. 3:6)
With thanks to the Lord, we announce the 30th wedding anniversary of our parents

JOHN and BEATRIX HOFSTEE
(nee DeBlieck)

Congratulations from their children:
Janet Hofstee & Ed Van Veen — London
Susan & Ron Greydanus — Toronto
Carmen
Mark & Anitra Hofstee (nee Ensing) — Guelph
Michael Hofstee — Listowel
You are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 6, 1989, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at 430 Inkerman W., Listowel, Ont.

Terneuzen Grimsby
1949 April 21 1989

WILLEM JAN
and
ADRIANA MARIA VAN WELY
(nee Loof)

On April 21, our parents and grandparents will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. We praise God for his love and faithfulness through all these years of marriage. Our prayer is that the Lord will give them many more years together under his care.
Their children and grandchildren:
John & Edna Van Wely — Grassie, Ont.
Sean, Jeff, Mark, Nadine, Angela
Mary & Paul Carney — Kanata, Ont.
Scott, Jonathan, Leigh
Rob & Rose Van Wely — Grimsby, Ont.
Matthew, Kristen, Ashley
Susan & Art Schaafsma — Ridgetown, Ont.
Adrienne, Katrina, Suzanne
Theo & Jackie Van Wely — Grimsby, Ont.
Chantal
"The eternal God is your refuge." (Deut. 33:27a)

Bowmanville Beamsville
1954 May 1 1989
With joy and thanksgiving we celebrate the 35th anniversary of our parents and grandparents

HENDRICK and ELLY ZUIDERSMA
(nee Rozema)

May the Lord continue to bless you in the years to come.
Congratulations:
Dorothy & Brian Rutgers
Amy, Jennifer
John & Linda Zuidersma
Suzanne, Mark, Vicki, Ricky
Annette & Chuck Drost
Joey, Melanie, Aaron
Melvin & Krista Zuidersma
Dianne Zuidersma & Nick (fiance)
— all of Beamsville.
Home address: Kinsman Rd., R.R.#2, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0.

Anniversaries

Rosenburg Cayuga
1944 May 16 1989
With thankfulness to the Lord we inform you of the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents

ARY and MARIA VANDERKOOY
(nee VanderKnaap)

Tena Postma — St. Catharines, Ont.
Michele, Tony
Nellie & Pete DeHaan — Smithville, Ont.
Lisa, Steven, Heather, David
Evelyn & Jack Dam — Vineland, Ont.
Stephanie, Martin, Jonathan
Joyce & Charley Fisher — Caledonia, Ont.
Tena, Joey, Jan-Marie, Audrey
John & Marlene VanderKooy — Cayuga, Ont.
Todd, Ryan, Emilie
Kathleen & Herman VanderLeest — Surrey, B.C.
Aaron, Dana, Bryan, Andrea, Adrian
Ben & Femmy Walpot — Cayuga, Ont.
Bernadine, Conrad
Open house at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church of York, Saturday, May 20, 1989, from 2-5 p.m.
Home address: R.R.#4, Cayuga, ON N0A 1E0.

Koudekerk a/d Ryn Brantford
1944 May 26 1989
"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." (Ps. 32:8)
With joy and thanksgiving to our God, we are happy to celebrate our parents and grandparents 45th wedding anniversary

JELLE and MACHELTJE ZYLSTRA
(nee Rademaker)

It is our prayer that God will continue to bless them for many more years together with us.
Cathy & Henry Zuidema — Wallaceburg, Ont.
Carina, Brendan, Matthew, Timothy, Jason
Auke & Frances Zylstra — Brantford, Ont.
Michael, Adam, Joshua, Sarah
Jacomina & John Winter — Brantford, Ont.
Jacquie, Kevin, Curt, Sandra
Bill & Linda Zylstra — Burford, Ont.
Marcy, Billy
Margaret & John Seldentuis — Cambridge, Ont.
Warren, Daniel, Dayna
Lypje Zylstra — Brantford, Ont.
Ilyas, Ibrahim
Wybe & Frances Zylstra — Mt. Vernon, Ont.
Jennifer, Christopher, Jason, Jeffrey, Paul
Gary & Susan Zylstra — Burford, Ont.
Tammy, Tommy, David, Gary, Gabriel
Minke & Robert Leenderste — Mt. Pleasant, Ont.
Erica, Heather, Jolene
Reina Zylstra — Brantford, Ont.
Alicia
Jelle & Sandy Zylstra — Burford, Ont.
Leanna, Bradley, Steven
Cora & Bert Vandebeek — Aurora, Ont.
Maria, Kevin, Andre, April
Marius & Christena Zylstra — Brantford, Ont.
Richard, Sonja
Janet & Michael Warnock — Brantford, Ont.
Carly
Bryan & Gaye Zylstra — Mt. Vernon, Ont.
Laura, Justin, Darryl
Open house will be held on Friday, May 19, 1989, in the Brantford Chr. Ref. Church hall, 17 Patterson Ave. from 7-9 p.m.
Home address: R.R.#4, Brantford, ON N3T 5L7.

Classified

Anniversaries

Congratulations to Everhardus and Jessie Vangennip (nee Schilthuis) on their 60th wedding anniversary.

Wirdum, Gron. Barrie, Ont.
1929 April 27 1989
Psalm 118:1

We hope to celebrate the 60th wedding anniversary of our parents, grand- and great-grandparents

EVERHARDUS and JESSIE VANGENNIP
(nee Schilthuis)

Our prayer is that God may watch over them and the remainder of their years together.
Catharina Weistra Van Gennip
Paul Van Gennip
John & Jessie Boulus
Garry & Mary Van Gennip
grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.
Open house on April 28, 1989, from 1:30 till 3:30 p.m., First Chr. Ref. Church, Shirley Ave., Barrie, Ont.
Home address: R.R.#3, Barrie, ON L4M 4S5.

Obituaries

The Dutch Ladies' Society "Ora et Labora" of the First Lethbridge Chr. Ref. Church extend their sincere sympathy to Mrs. Diane Appelhof and her family in the sudden passing of

Mr. JACOB APPELHOF

on Good Friday, Mar. 24, 1989.
We pray that the Lord will sustain them with his comfort.
1 Cor. 15:57.

On Apr. 3, 1989, the Lord in his infinite wisdom took home our dear sister and sister-in-law

Mrs. AKKE (Jill) VAN DER HEIDE

at the age of 67.
Predeceased by her husband, Jilles and son Willy.
"In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed." (Ex. 15:13a)
Willem & Netty Visser — Heerenveen, the Neth.
Frances & Harry Van de Wyngaard — Melbourne, Australia
Grietje & Henk Wieringa — Bloemfontein, South Africa
Sjoerd & Thea Visser — Nw. Loosdrecht, the Neth.
Sid & Ann Visser — Scarborough, Ont.
Tryntje Faber — Holten, the Neth.
Murray & Jenny Visser — Agincourt, Ont.
Jet & Cees Vogel — Zuidwolde, the Neth.
John & Janny Visser — Agincourt, Ont.

Obituaries

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you." (John 14:1,2)
It pleased the Lord to take home unto himself on Saturday, Apr. 8, 1989, his child, our beloved husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather

CORNELIS KUIPER

in his 85th year.
Beloved husband of Alice Kuiper (nee Ten Hoope) for nearly 60 years.
Beloved father of:
Peter & Anne Kuiper
Case & Margaret Kuiper
Jennie & Nick Heykoop
Gerrie & John Bos
Dearly loved by 22 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.
Predeceased by one son Henry and one great-granddaughter Laura Neutel.
Correspondence address: Mrs. Alice Kuiper, 253 Victoria St., Clinton, ON N0M 1L0.

The Board of the Canadian Federation of Christian Reformed Women mourns the loss of

Mrs. JILL VANDER HEIDE

who died in the Lord on Apr. 3, 1989.
She served the Federation as its faithful and able treasurer for four years and she will be missed by many as a good friend.
May God sustain her family in their sorrow.
Mrs. Alice Los, President
Mrs. Lydia Demik, Secretary

Help wanted

MUTUAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS
invites you to consider an opportunity for service in a Christ-centred program for children ages nine to 18 with emotional and behavioural problems. This family-model program has three homes with house-parent couples and child-care workers living in, except during days off. Couples, and single men and women are invited to consider and apply to: Mutual Support Systems, R.R.#1, Perry Road, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0; (416) 899-2311.

Obituaries

"I love the Lord, for he heard my voice, he heard my cry for mercy." (Ps. 116:15)
On Apr. 13, 1989, the Lord ended the earthly journey of

WILLEM VAN GEEST

in his 78th year.
Though he leaves an empty place among family and friends, we realize with joy that his struggles are now over.
Dear husband of Machtelt Van Geest (nee VanderLugt) of St. Catharines, Ont.
Dear father and grandfather of:
Mary & Harry Janssens — Wellandport, Ont.
Len & Nellie Van Geest — Waterloo, Ont.
Daniel, Jordana, Brian
Ted & Marjorie Van Geest — St. Catharines, Ont.
Jeff, Matt, Joel
Mieke Van Geest & Jeff Sloan — Sioux Lookout, Ont.
Jana
William & Nel Van Geest — Woodbridge, Ont.
Nathaniel, Thomas, William, Rachel
Peter Van Geest & Pat VanReenen — London, Ont.
David, Erica
The funeral took place at Maranatha Chr. Ref. Church, St. Catharines, Ont., on Apr. 15, 1989.
Correspondence address: 2 White St., Apt. 307, St. Catharines, ON L2N 1Z2.

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!
O what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long;
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
On Mar. 30, 1989, the Lord took into his eternal glory

Mr. KLAAS VENHUIZEN

after a four-month illness from a stroke.
He was in his 86th year.
Beloved husband of Minke Riemersma for 26 years, and dear father of:
Jean & Bill Leistra (nee Venhuizen) — Strathroy, Ont.
Bill & Ann Venhuizen (nee Bos) — Elora, Ont.
Norman & Tina Venhuizen (nee BydeLey) — Clearwater, Ont.
Jannie & Stewart Klazinga (nee Venhuizen) — Camlachie, Ont.
Cor & Tiny Venhuizen (nee VandeLoo) — London, Ont.
Bertha & John Pelleboer (nee Venhuizen) — Camlachie, Ont.
Mary & Paul VanderPloeg (nee Venhuizen) — Komoka, Ont.
Dear grandfather of 30 grandchildren and 27 great-grandchildren. Predeceased by his first wife Diewerke Niewold (1957), two grandchildren and one great-grandchild.
The funeral service was held on Saturday, Apr. 1, 1989, at the Bethel Pentecostal Church, 1565 London Rd., Clearwater, Ont. Burial was in Bethel Cemetery, Warwick Township.
Correspondence address: 77 Burns St., Strathroy, ON N7G 1E5.

Help wanted

We are looking for a **driver/sales-person** for our wholesale operation. Can start immediately. Experience not necessary; we will train you. Van Rooyen Greenhouses, Vineland, Ont. (416) 562-5459.

Summer help wanted on **dairy farm** in Richmond, Ont. I will pay transportation costs. Some experience an asset but not necessary. Phone (613) 838-2310. W. De Haan, Box 72, Richmond, ON K0A 2Z0.

Help wanted

Herdsmanager

required for a fully modern 135 sow farrow to finish hog operation. Excellent facilities. Person must be fully experienced and must be able to work without much supervision. Excellent wages and housing supplied to right individual. Must have references. Christian Reformed Church and school close by.

Dronkelaar Farms
Iron Springs, Alta.
(403) 738-4489
(403) 738-4587

Calvinist Contact

a national Christian publisher
requires a

bookkeeping and proofreading clerk

Previous experience, though desirable, is not essential. We are looking for someone who is accurate, is good with figures, has an excellent command of the English language, has good typing skills, and is able to manage time well. The position is for three or four days a week.

Send resume and references to:
Stan de Jong
c/o Calvinist Contact
#4, 261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Christian Farmers Federation of Alberta

invites applications for a

Research and Policy Co-ordinator/Editor

Responsibilities include co-ordinating Federation efforts in research and policy development, public affairs; editing Earthkeeping magazine, co-published five times a year by the Christian Farmers Federations of Alberta and Ontario on issues of faith and agriculture to stimulate responsible participation in the food system.

Qualifications: Working knowledge of agricultural issues; journalistic sensitivities; proven ability to write and speak effectively and easily; strong analytical, editing and interpersonal skills and commitment to forwarding the Federation's goals and purposes; computer and publishing process familiarity desirable.

Salary for full-time position commensurate with experience and CFFA's salary grid. Job description available.

Please submit letter of application, resume, references and writing samples by May 19, 1989, to:

CFFA, Gus Polman
10766-97 St., Edmonton, AB T5H 2M1
(403) 428-6981

Salem Christian Mental Health Association Inc.

invites applications for the position of

Executive Co-ordinator

The position will emphasize co-ordination and program development, direct reporting to the Board of Trustees, and a close relationship with the support community. Commitment to Reformed World and Life view is a prerequisite as well as the ability to work with different professionals in the field of mental health and family services.
Post-baccalaureate is preferred. Clinical training and background would be useful, but is not essential.
Applications, resumes and references must be sent by **May 8, 1989, to:**

Mr. John Lutgendorff
Secretary Board of Trustees
310 Mill St. S., Suite 403
Brampton, ON L6Y 3B1
Phone (416) 459-3913

Accommodations

Young Christian woman wishes to let rooms in her house to other young Christian women. Centrally located at Limeridge and West Fifth St. in Hamilton, Ont. Occupancy: July 1, 1989. For details call Sandra at (416) 648-1681 or write to: 26 Daffodil Cres., Ancaster, ON L9K 1C8.

Non-smoking, working female needed to share a townhouse in Toronto. Close to subway. Available June 1, 1989. Call Joanne after 6 p.m. (416) 465-8179.

For rent in Brampton: Furnished room, kitchenette and bathroom for non-smoker. Please call (416) 453-8352.

Real Estate

Moving to or from Thunder Bay?
Call Don Ten Have
(807) 577-4810
Representing
Midwest Realty Limited
(807) 623-7404

Greenhouse for sale: 65,000 sq. ft. greenhouse and auxiliary buildings. Total 12 acres of sandy soil near Waterdown, Ont. Nice one-storey house. Contact Roland Bradshaw Real Estate Ltd., Hamilton, Ont. Phone (416) 574-2433 and ask for George Newlands, Sales Rep.

Employment wanted

Do you need help in your business?
Young healthy Dutchman is anxious to work for six to nine months in Southern Ontario. Will consider any type of work. Age 20, member of the Chr. Ref. Church. Work permit, etc., approved in principle, only a job is needed. Please contact Harry Struik, Kuipersdijk 66, Enkhuizen, the Netherlands, or in Canada: A.F. Sietses, 1811 Pattinson Cres., Mississauga, ON L5J 1H6.

Personals

Christian bachelor, mid-30s, desires meeting sincere Christian woman in Ontario for a possible lasting relationship. Please reply to file #2519, Calvinist Contact, 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1.

Vacations

LANG'S RESORT
Cottages and campgrounds
RICE LAKE
Like fishing the big ones? Fully-equipped large (newly-renovated) housekeeping cottages — colour TV, sandy bathing area, rec. hall, new boats and motors, store, live bait, fishing lic., campsites available for weekend, week, or season. Like a clean quiet resort. It's all here at the family place.
Before you book you '89 vacation, take a drive and see our new look. Only 83 miles from Toronto. Write or phone for brochure:
Lang's Resort
R.R. #3, Box C, Roseneath, ON
K0K 2X0
Phone: (416) 352-2308

Teachers

AYLMER, Ont.: Immanuel Christian School invites applications for a definite opening in a **Grade 4/5** classroom. The ability to teach intermediate **French** is essential. Send letter of application and resume to: Andy VanderPloeg, Principal, Immanuel Christian School, 75 Caverly Rd., Aylmer, ON N5H 2P6, or call (519) 773-8476 (school) or (519) 773-5009 (home).

BELLEVILLE, Ont.: Belleville District Christian School is in need of a teacher in **Grade 2** and in **Grade 7 and 8** for the 1989/90 school year. Interested parties are requested to forward letters of application and resumes to: Belleville District Christian School, R.R.#5, Belleville, ON K8N 4Z5. (M. VanDyk, Principal (613) 962-7849).

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Durham Christian High School in Bowmanville is soliciting applications for two teaching positions for the 1989/90 school year. The one position is in **English** and the other is a girls **physical education/mathematics** combination. Please send applications, resumes, and references to: Durham Christian High School, R.R.#1, Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2. Attention: Mr. Ren Siebenga.

BOWMANVILLE, Ont.: Knox Christian School in Bowmanville, Ont. requires a **Grade 4** classroom teacher **OR** a **Grade 5** teacher able to teach **French** to Grades 5-8 for September 1989. Interested applicants should submit resume and references to the principal: W.M. Helmus, R.R.#1, Scugog St., Bowmanville, ON L1C 3K2. Phone school (416) 623-5871 or (416) 623-6952.

BURLINGTON: Trinity Christian School Burlington, Ont. has possible openings for teachers in the **Junior** and **Intermediate** divisions. Please send resume to: Trinity Christian School, 650 Walkers Line, Burlington, ON L7N 2E7.

DRAYTON, Ont.: Calvin Christian School has an opening for a combined **Grade 7/8** teaching position. The ability to teach **French** is an asset. Strengths in **phys-ed** and **music** are welcome. Please request application forms from Mr. A.J. Vanderstoel, Principal, Box 141, Drayton, ON N0G 1P0. Phone (519) 638-2935 (school) or (519) 638-3606 (home).

DUNNVILLE, Ont.: Dunnville Christian School will need a **Grade 4/5** teacher by September. Strengths in **French** and **music** will be an asset. Dunnville lies at the Grand River on Hwy. 3 and is within a short drive from Redeemer College, Hamilton and St. Catharines.
Send your applications to Mr. William R. Rang c/o Dunnville Chr. School, R.R.#1, Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1. Phone (416) 774-5142.

KINGSTON, Ont.: Kingston Christian School invites applications for a possible opening at the **junior or intermediate** level. Strength in **French** would be an asset. Please send resume and/or inquiries to the principal at 130 Wright Cres., Kingston, ON K7L 4T9. Phone (613) 546-4872.

LUCKNOW, Ont.: Lucknow District Christian School requires a teacher for the **Grade 1/2** classroom or for the **Grade 3/4/5** classroom. Send application and resume to: Principal, Etty Broer, Lucknow District Christian School, Box 550, Lucknow, ON N0G 2H0.

Teachers

GEORGETOWN, Ont.: The Georgetown District Christian School invites applications for possible positions in the **primary and junior grades.** Strength in **Music** and/or **French** would be an asset. Also a possible vacancy at the Kindergarten level (3 days). Please forward resume and/or inquiries to: Mr. George Petrusma, Principal, R.R.#1, Georgetown, ON L7G 4S4. Tel. (416) 877-4221 (school) or (416) 877-6444 (residence).

MEDICINE HAT, Alta.: Medicine Hat Christian School, a dynamic and growing interdenominational school in sunny southern Alberta invites applications for a position in **junior high (Grades 7-9),** commencing Sept. 1989. Preference will be given to candidates whose specialties are: **social studies, language arts** and **physical education.** We also have an opening in **ECS (Kindergarten)** for four days per week. In addition we need a **Grade 1/2** teacher (combined class). Interested applicants please forward resume and/or direct inquiries to: Wm. Slofstra, Principal, 68 Rice Dr. S.E., Medicine Hat, AB T1B 3X2 or phone (403) 526-7192 (home) or (403) 526-3246 (school).

MUSKOKA, Ont.: Muskoka Christian School requires a teacher for a split grade primary class — **Grades 1 and 2.** We are a small school of 75 students, a member of OACS, though more interdenominational than most, set in the heart of beautiful Muskoka. We request a full resume with your application. Mailing address: Box 150, Utterson, ON P0B 1M0. For inquiries call Bill Fitch, Principal, (705) 385-2847 (school) or (705) 645-8276 (home).

NEWMARKET, Ont.: Holland Marsh District Christian School. In our caring, supportive community just north of Toronto, we need teachers for **Kindergarten and Grade 8**. Please consider these openings prayerfully for 1989/90 and address any inquiries and applications to: Corrie Bootsma, Vice-Principal, Holland Marsh District Christian School, R.R.#2, Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9. Tel. (416) 775-3701.

NEERLANDIA, Alta.: Neerlandia School, a public Christian School, requires an **elementary/lower secondary** teacher for the 1989/90 school year. Must have expertise in **art (fine arts)** and **language arts** or **social studies.** Specialties in **phys-ed** and **French** are desirable. Primary duties will be in the elementary grades. Send applications and inquiries to John Piers, Principal, Neerlandia School, Box 10, Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0. Phone school (403) 674-5581, home (403) 674-4308.

TERRACE: Centennial Chr. School, located in Terrace, B.C., is inviting applications for openings in **K-8** for the 1989-90 school year. Centennial Chr. School, operating since 1967, with a present enrolment of 92 students, moving into new school facilities and adding a possible Grade 8 class, will make the 89-90 school year exciting and challenging. The school, located in the beautiful Skeena Valley, offers many dynamic opportunities for teachers. For further information please contact: Frank Voogd, Principal, 3602 Sparks St., Terrace, BC V8G 2V6. Tel. (604) 635-6173.

Teachers

RED DEER, Alta.: The Red Deer Christian School has possible openings for the 1989/90 school year in the following areas: Full-time **Kindergarten** and **Grade 2** and part-time **French** (50 per cent). Interested individuals should direct inquiries and applications to the school at 14 McVicar St., Red Deer, AB T4N 0M2, c/o Mr. R. Duggan.

SMITHERS, B.C.: The Christian School Society of Smithers and Telkwa of Smithers B.C. has an opening in **elementary** and **secondary French, upper elementary language arts** and **primary Grades 2 or 3,** and a possible opening in **elementary and secondary phys-ed.** Ours is a two-campus school system. Please contact: Glen Ewald at Box 2117, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0. Phone school (604) 847-9833, res. (604) 847-2186.

Correction:

50th anniversary
ED and WILMA BREEUWSMA
Trillium Village, 400 Dominion St., Strathroy, Ont. Regarding the open house, the corrected sentence should read: We will now celebrate this happy occasion on Saturday, Apr. 29, 1989.
Our apologies. C.C. staff

Teachers

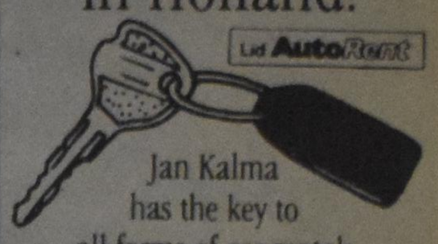
Summer Job Market

HILLSBURG, Ont.: I'm a high school girl looking for a job on a dairy farm in Ontario. Please call Dava-Lynne Hoeksema after 4 p.m. Tel. (519) 855-4784.

ST. CATHARINES, Ont.: 18-year-old student needs summer job. Has experience in landscaping. Has driver's licence and can also operate a tractor. Willing to learn anything available. Preferably warehouse or store. Please call (416) 935-1020 and ask for Mark.

For Rent

Want to rent a car while in Holland?



Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.

Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.

jan kalma
De Meer 24, 9201 EZ Drachten
The Netherlands — Tel. (31) 5120-15199
Fax (31) 5120-32324

Hamilton District Christian High School

invites applications for:

⅓ teaching position for woodworking
⅔ teaching position which would include some combination of English, French and drama

Please send all inquiries and resumes to:
Ron Dirkse, Principal
Hamilton District Christian High School
28 Athens St., Hamilton, ON L9C 3K9
Phone (416) 389-2296

Brantford Christian School

invites applications for full-time teachers for the school year 1989/90 as follows:

— Grades 5 and 6

Ability to teach French would be considered an asset.
Brantford is a community with affordable housing and is only a 15-20 min. drive to Redeemer College or Hamilton.

Please call:
Mr. C. VanderVeen, Principal
(519) 752-0433 (school) or (519) 752-4100 (home)

Help wanted

Help wanted

Mechanic Class "A"

required for 4-bay general repair garage.
Established shop for 15 years. Pleasant working conditions and benefits.
For more details call:

Jack L. Dam
Ryckman's Auto Service
2350 Highway #6, Mount Hope, Ontario
Phone (416) 679-6095

Events

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

REFORMED BIBLE COLLEGE

With thanks to our Saviour God, RBC invites all past and future supporters, together with alumni, to celebrate this milestone of 50 years of blessings, at easily accessible **Redeemer College Campus, 777 Hwy. 53 E., Ancaster, Ont.**

RBC graduates are serving Christ in the U.S., Canada, Nigeria, Honduras, Dominion Republic, Kenya, Uganda, El Salvador, Haiti, the Philippines, Egypt, Cyprus, Korea, Peru, Mexico, etc. Tens of thousands of lives have been reached through their ministry.

May 11, 1989 **Punch 6:30 p.m.**
Dinner 7:00 p.m.

Call **before May 5** for your **complimentary tickets: Wally or Irene Boonstra (416) 527-1999.**

Join the celebration with Dr. Edwin Roels, new President, participating.

THE VISION LIVES AT RBC!

DUTCH SERVICE

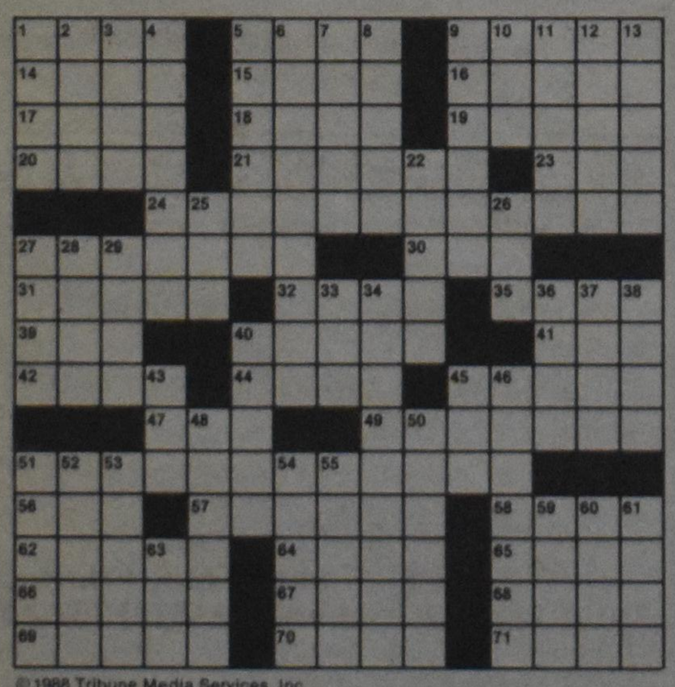
PLACE: Ancaster CRC, #70 Highway 53 East, Ancaster (approx. 2 km. west of Redeemer College)
DATE: Sunday, April 30, 1989 **TIME:** 3:00 p.m.
PASTOR: Rev. Henry De Moor

All Ontario Conference of CCM-CRC

Theme: Contending for the faith according to the Word.
Speakers: Nelson Kloosterman, Robert Godfrey, Thomas Vanden Heuvel
Date: September 22-23, 1989
Place: Maranatha CRC, Woodstock, Ont.

Weekly Puzzle

by Stanley B. Whitten



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ACROSS
1 Bugle call
5 Highlander
9 Herbage
14 Tumult
15 Erode
16 Charge
17 Unfounded
18 Too
19 Ms Dickinson
20 Banana skin
21 Witty answer
23 — Aviv
24 Ella
27 Purge
30 — Paulo
31 Amass
32 Quarrel
35 Explosive sound
39 Goof
40 Indulges in reverie
41 Corrida shout
42 Hit the road
44 Depart
45 Cassette fillers
47 Aardvark morsel
49 Suffolk city
51 Arar
56 Tax shelter letters
57 US president
58 Hit
62 Embankment
64 Manuscript
65 Candid
66 Toll
67 Give off
68 Stag
69 Impudent
70 Repudiate
71 Fr. magazine

DOWN
1 Journey
2 Assistant
3 Gdansk native
4 Excellent
5 Teems
6 Anoa
7 Drying kilns
8 Scout unit
9 — Green, Scot.
10 Daiquiri ingredient
11 O'Day of song
12 Mass. port
13 Mode
22 Musical symbols
25 Pair joiner
26 Today
27 Masticate
28 Knowledge
29 Merit
33 Luau dish
34 Serum
36 Indian
37 Author Waugh
38 Interlock
40 Subway
43 Shaver
45 Mao follower
46 Inspiring reverence
48 Videlicet
50 Attractive
51 Jockey's uniform
52 Hippodrome
53 Church sections
54 Fed the kitty
55 — de menthe
59 Ring stone
60 Small compartment
61 Leg joint
63 They loop the Loop

Last Week's Puzzle

A	Z	U	R			N	O	T	A		A	S	T	A
V	O	T	E		P	E	R	O	N		S	O	I	R
O	N	E	S	H	O	U	L	D	N	T	M	O	C	K
W	E	S		F	R	R	E	D		R	I	N	K	S
			M	A	N	I			B	O	L			
T	H	E	C	R	O	C	O	D	I	L	E	T	I	L
H	A	R	I				R	E	A	L		R	M	A
E	T	A	L		L	A	D	E	S		A	I	N	S
G	I	S		G	O	R	E				B	E	E	S
O	N	E	H	A	S	C	R	O	S	S	E	D	T	O
			A	L	T			B	E	A	T			
A	S	T	R	O		G	U	L	A	G		P	O	S
T	H	E	O	P	P	O	S	I	T	E	B	A	N	K
T	E	A	L		T	A	N	G	O		L	A	C	Y
Y	A	R	D		A	L	A	E			T	R	E	E

Calendar of Events

Apr. 29	The King's College - Convocation/ Graduation at 7 p.m. in All-Saints Cathedral, **Edmonton,** Alta.
Apr. 29	Concert by the combined St. Thomas Ladies Choir, the St. Thomas Male Choir and the Strathroy Mixed Choir. At 7:30 p.m. in the CRC, **Mt. Brydges,** Ont.
Apr. 29	Spring concert by Andre Knevel at 8 p.m. in Mountainview CRC, **Grimsby,** Ont.
Apr. 29	Spring concert by the Maranatha Singers of Cambridge CRC, the Wainfleet Maranatha Choir and the Cambridge Chr. School Choir & Recorder Group. At 8 p.m. in the Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge,** Ont.
Apr. 29	Organist Christiaan Teeuwsen in concert at the new pipe organ, at 8 p.m. in the Maranatha CRC, **Bowmanville,** Ont. Collection.
Apr. 29	Lawn sale, proceeds to Chr. Heritage Party. From 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. at 468 Canboro Rd., **Fenwick,** Ont. For info. call (416) 892-5031.
Apr. 29	Spring concert by the "Laudate Dominum Choir" from Chatham. At 8 p.m. in the CRC, **Ancaster,** Ont. $5.00 at the door.
Apr. 30	Dutch service led by Rev. Henry De Moor at 3 p.m. in the CRC of **Ancaster,** Ont.
May 5	Peter Slofstra in concert with the SRS Studio Band, at 8 p.m., Chatham & District Chr. High, **Chatham,** Ont.
May 5-6	Concert by the "Chapel Singers (dir. Henry Goertzen) and the Christian Choir "New Life" (dir. Les Neufeld) at 8 p.m. in the Covenant CRC, **St. Catharines,** Ont. Tickets: $5.00 (adults), $3.00 (children & seniors), $15.00 (family).
May 5-7	Annual Young Adults Spring Rally in **Burlington,** Ont. Main speaker: Rev. D. Feddes. For info. call (519) 623-1734 or (416) 383-1134.
May 6	Improvisation concert by Master Organist Andre Knevel, at 8 p.m. First CRC, Charlton & Hess, **Hamilton,** Ont.
May 6	Camp Ke-Mon-Oya Staff Reunion, from 4-8 p.m. at Grace CRC, **Scarborough,** Ont. For info. call (416) 466-6304 (p.m.)
May 7	Spring concert by the St. Thomas & District Male Choir "Crescendo," at 8 p.m., Knox Presb. Church, Hinck St., **St. Thomas,** Ont.
May 9-13	Organist Frans van der Hauw (Bolsward) in concert: **May 9:** at 7:30 p.m., Heritage Hall, Holland Chr. Homes, **Brampton,** Ont.; **May 10:** at 8 p.m. in Maranatha Can. Ref. Church **Fergus,** Ont.; **May 12:** at 8 p.m. Knox Presb. Church, **Grand Valley,** Ont.; **May 13:** at 8 p.m. Collier St. United Church, **Barrie, Ont.**
May 10	Convention 1989 of the Can. Fed. of CR Women. At **Bramalea** Baptist Church (corner Hwy. 7 and Dixie Rd.). Speakers: Rev. H.A. Vander Windt and Mrs. Donna Lee Walter.
May 11	Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner of the Reformed Bible College at 7 p.m., Redeemer College, **Ancaster,** Ont. RBC president Dr. Edwin Roels will participate. For complimentary tickets call (416) 527-1999.
May 12-14	Spring Conference of the CR Singles Fellowship of Ottawa. At Carleton University, **Ottawa,** Ont. Keynote speaker: Rev. Jack Quartel. For info. call (613) 727-5851 or 591-1432. Register before April 25, 1989.
May 19-21	**Ninth Annual Clinton Klompen Feest.** Fri.-Sat.: RCMP Musical Ride, etc.; Sunday: Interdenominational church service only. For info. call (519) 482-7893.
May 19-22	Fifteenth Annual All-Ontario Young Calvinist Convention "Prepare for Glory" at Carleton University, **Ottawa,** Ont. For info. call (519) 745-3371.
May 20-22	40th Anniversary of the CRC, **Aylmer,** Ont. Everyone welcome!
May 26-27	"New Creation" Retreat Weekend for Classes Niagara/Hamilton. At Mount Carmel Retreat Center, **Niagara Falls,** Ont. For info. call (416) 892-8059.
May 27	A.B.C. Sale at Shalom Manor, **Grimsby,** Ont. from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. A Dutch market flavour where you can buy almost anything. (Crafts, flowers, shrubs, baked goods.) Come and support your seniors!!!
May 27-28	40th Anniversary celebrations of the **Woodstock and area** Chr. Ref. Churches. For info. call (519) 475-4445 or 537-8459. All former members are invited.

RICE LAKE

Quiet family resort. Clean lake front, housekeeping cottages, boats and motors. Store, swimming and excellent fishing. Reasonable rates for opening weekend of May 12 and month of June.
For a relaxing weekend or a week away, call now! Brochure available.

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Phone (416) 352-2821

ADVANCE NOTICE:

The Houston Christian Reformed Church invites all former members to join in celebrating its 50th anniversary on August 12 and 13, 1989. Plan now to attend. Pictures and stories are being requested for inclusion in an anniversary booklet (deadline for copy: June 1). Material and queries may be directed to Anniversary Committee, Box 6, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0.

Improvisation concert Andre Knevel

Playing his own variations on well-known psalms, hymns and classics in a concert at First Christian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ont. (corner Charlton & Hess Sts.)
Saturday, May 6th **8:00 p.m.**

HOLLANDSE DAG

Dit jaar hopen we deze dag te houden op
Woensdag, 14 juni, 1989
in het Moorefield Park. Aanvang 10 uur. De spreker is Ds. Martin D. Geleynse. Verder is er samenzang, voordracht en muziek. Neem uw lunch mee!

De Commissie

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Church news

Christian Reformed Church

Address change
— Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 287 Water St., Guelph, ON N1G 1B6; home phone (519) 821-5233; study (519) 822-7720.

Books

Robert VanderVennen, book review editor

Christian living

Canadian Christians and homosexuality

A Crisis of Understanding: Homosexuality and the Canadian Church, edited by Denyse O'Leary. Burlington: Welch Publishing Co., 1988. Paperback, 147 pp., $6.95. Reviewed by Robert VanderVennen.

This book, a new type of publishing which might be called "book journalism," is a printing of current articles and talks on homosexuality. It gives a rather full picture of evangelical Christian thinking on homosexuality in Canada today.

The only exception to the "current Canadian" content of the book is the major piece in it, a 40-page presentation of the report presented to the Christian Reformed synod of 1973, and the actions of that synod. A two-page introduction to the report was freshly written by Toronto campus Chaplain Derk Pierik, who notes that the request for the denominational study came from Canadian churches.

The CRC report is comprehensive, though it does not address itself to specific public problems. It contains a definition of homosexuality, an exploration of its causes, consequences of homosexuality for persons who have that condition, a biblical study and issues of biblical interpretation, and a discussion of a theological-ethical approach. Key to understanding the report is its distinction between the condition of homosexuality, which it calls "homosexuality," and the practice of homosexual relations, which it calls "homosexualism."

The report includes both male and female homosexuality in its definition of the term, and it speaks of homosexuality "as a condition of disordered sexuality which reflects the brokenness of our sinful world and for which the homosexual may himself [or herself] bear only a minimal responsibility." Explicit homosexual practice is "condemned as incompatible with obedience to the will of God as revealed in Holy Scripture."

The bottom line of the CRC study is found in 11 statements of pastoral advice. Christians are advised to a posture of patient understanding, compassion and loving support of homosexual persons. Such persons, especially in their earlier years, should seek help to effect their sexual reorientation. The pastoral advice adds that homosexual members, "like all Christians, are called to the employment of their gifts in the cause of the kingdom" and "are to be given opportunity to render within the offices and structures of the congregation the same service that is expected of heterosexuals."

The book is organized in three parts. The first deals with lives touched by homosexuality, the second with the church's response, and the third with broader social implications.

Lives touched by homosexuality

Christian psychiatrist J.W. McCormick gives some helpful scientific information, along with his conclusion that Christians are to love the homosexual person even though they consider homosexual practice to be sinful. Pat Allan describes his own difficult move to overcome homosexuality and identifies "New Beginnings," a healing ministry for homosexuals which he runs in downtown Toronto. Rev. John Howard of the United Church describes his participation as a former homosexual on the committee that prepared his denomination's recent controversial report, and his own objections to that report.

In the section on the church's response, Rev. Victor Shepherd of the United Church writes a scathing critique of his church's 1988 report on homosexuality. A problem is that unless you know the United Church report, you are not able to form an independent opinion of his criticisms. I think the most illuminating piece in the book is Dr. Oliver O'Donovan's theological discussion of homosexuality based on the teachings of St. Paul.

The section on the broader social implications of homosexuality include an article by Brian Stiller arguing against the inclusion of sexual orientation in the Human Rights codes of Ontario and of Canada, and a presentation by Denyse O'Leary of the history of AIDS, which she points to as "a serious challenge to the current secular philosophy of life." Susan Careless offers a critique of the new AIDS curriculum of the Ontario Ministry of Education. Appendices present a recommended reading list and identify Christian healing and support groups for homosexuals.

The book pictures Canadian evangelicals as opposing homosexuality as sinful but wanting to give sympathetic help to people struggling with sexual orientation, and especially to homosexual Christians who wish to change to a heterosexual orientation.

Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

Growth

"And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." **(Acts 2:47)**

Joseph Pulitzer, the famous publisher, had a rather inflated view of his *New York World* newspaper. He wanted it to "be more powerful than the president" of the United States. He even thought it might influence the inhabitants of other planets! In fact, he talked seriously about erecting an advertising sign in New Jersey that would be visible on Mars! The only thing that kept him from doing it was a question from one of his assistants: "What language shall we print it in?"

Advertising

Over a hundred years ago, Thomas Smith formed the classic statement about marketing. His "Hints to Intending Advertisers" is still up-to-date:

The first time a man looks at an advertisement, he does not see it.
The second time he does not notice it.
The third time he is conscious of its existence.
The fourth time he faintly remembers having seen it before.
The fifth time he reads it.
The sixth time he turns up his nose at it.
The seventh time he reads it through and says, "Oh what a bother!"
The eighth time he says, "Here's that confounded thing again!"
The ninth time he wonders if it amounts to anything.
The tenth time he thinks he will ask his neighbour if he has tried it.
The eleventh time he wonders how the advertiser makes it pay.
The twelfth time he thinks perhaps it may be worth something.
The thirteenth time he thinks it must be a good thing.
The fourteenth time he remembers that he has wanted such a thing for a long time.
The fifteenth time he is tantalized because he cannot afford to buy it.
The sixteenth time he thinks he will buy it some day.
The seventeenth time he makes a memorandum of it.
The eighteenth time he swears at his poverty.
The nineteenth time he counts his money carefully.
The twentieth time he sees it, he buys the article, or instructs his wife to do so.

Advertisers confess this creed every day. That's why they're willing to pay a million dollars a minute for Super Bowl broadcasting time. That's why "junk mail" floods the postal system. That's why those same little jingles keep hammering at our ears.

"Good News" publishing house

God is in the advertising business too. It's not "hard sell" but it is persistent. He did something outstanding when he displayed his love on a signpost outside Jerusalem. And the Apostle Peter tells us that ever since then, he's been on a marketing campaign to publish the Good News. In fact, the duration of history itself is part of his advertising budget (II Peter 3).

Still, his major investment is in the Church. He opens hearts, but he does it through the testimony of the Church. He brings people to a knowledge of Christ, but it happens by way of the proclamation of the Church. He saves people, but they become part of the Church.

In fact, the major "business" of the Church is advertising for God. Jesus said that (Matthew 5:14-16). The Apostles knew that (I Peter 2:9-12). The Church has always believed that (I Timothy 1:15-17).

God calls. He adds people to the Church every day.

Sometimes, though, the Church forgets why she exists. The "advertising budget" is spent on lesser projects. And everybody loses.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

A Second Century of Proclaiming the Gospel and Developing Churches Around the World

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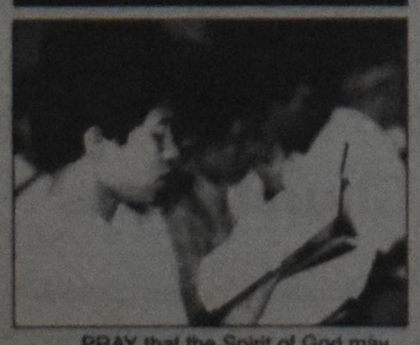

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